OF REFORMATION

Touching

CHVRCH-DISCIPLINE IN ENGLAND:

And the CAVSES that hither-to have hindred it.

TWO BOOKES,

Written to a FREIND.

Printed, for *Thomas Underhill* 1641.

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Sir,

Midst those deepe, and rooted sheames, which with every man Christianly instructed, ought to be most frequent of God, and of his miraculous Acts, and workes amongst men, and of our Religion and worship, to be perform'd to him; after the story of our Saviour Christ, suffering to the lowest beat of weaknesse, in the Flesh, and presently triumphing to the highest pitch of glory, in the Spirit, which drew up his body also, till

we in both be united to him in the Revelation of his Kingdome: I do not know of any thing more worthy to take up the whole passion of pitty, on the one side, and joy on the other: then to consider first, the foule and sudden corruption, and then after many a tedious age, the long-deferr'd; but much more wonderfull and happy reformation of the *Church* in these latter dayes. Sad it is to thinke how that Doctrine of the *Gospel*, planted by teachers Divinely inspir'd, and by them winnow'd, and sifted, from the chaffe of overdared Ceremonies, and refin'd to such a Spirituall height, and temper of purity, and knowledge of the Creator, that the body, with all the circumstances of time and place, were purifi'd by the affections of the regenerat Soule, and nothing left impure, but sinne; *Faith* needing not the weak, and fallible office of the Senses, to be either the Vshers, or Interpreters, of heavenly Mysteries, save where our Lord himselfe in his Sacraments ordain'd; that such a Doctrine should through the grosseneſſe, and blindneſſe, of her Professors, and the fraud of deceivable traditions, drag so downwards, as to backslide one way into the Jewish beggery, of old cast rudiments, and stumble forward another way into the new-vomited Paganisme, of sensuall Idolatry, attributing purity, or impurity, to things indifferent, that they might bring the inward acts of the *Spirit* to the outward, and customary ey-Service of the body, as if they could

could make *God* earthly, and fleshly, because they could not make themselves *heavenly*, and *Spirituall*: they began to draw downe all the Divine intercours, betwixt *God*, and the Soule, yea, the very shape of *God* himselfe, into an exterior, and bodily forme, urgently pretending a necessity, and obligement of joyning the body in a formall reverence, and *worship* circumscrib'd they hallow'd it, they fum'd it, they sprincl'd it, they be deck't it, not in robes of pure innocency, but of pure Linnen, with other deformed, and fantastick dresses in Palls, and Miters, gold, and guegaw's fetcht from *Arons* old wardrope, or the *Flamins vestry*: then was the *Priest* set to *con his motions*, and his *Postures* his *Liturgies*, and his *Lurries*, till the Soule by this meanes of over-bodying her selfe, given up justly to fleshly delights, bated her wing apace downeward: and finding the ease she had from her visible, and sensuous collegue the body in performance of *Religious* duties her pineons now broken, and flagging, shifted off from her selfe, the labour of high soaring any more, forgot her heavenly flight, and left the dull, and droyling carcas to plod on in the old rode, and drudging Trade of outward conformity. And here out of question from her pervers conceiting of *God*, and holy things, she had fain to believe no *God* at all, had not custome and the worme of conscience nipt her incredulity hence to all the duty's of evangelicall grace instead of the adop-

tive and cheerefull boldneſſe which our new alliance with *God* requires, came Servile, and thrall-like feare: for in very deed, the ſuperſtitious man by his good will is an Atheiſt; but being ſcarr'd from thence by the pangs, and gripes of a boyling conſcience, all in a pudder ſhuffles up to himſelfe ſuch a *God*, and ſuch a *worſhip* as is moſt agreeable to remedy his feare, which feare of his, as alſo is his hope, fixt onely upon the *Fleſh*, renders likewiſe the whole faculty of his apprehenſion, carnall, and all the inward acts of *worſhip* iſſuing from the native ſtrength of the SOVLE, run out laviſhly to the upper skin, and there harden into a cruſt of Formallitie. Hence men came to ſcan the *Scriptures*, by the Letter, and in the Covenant of our Redemption, magnifi'd the external ſigns more then the quickning power of the *Spirit*, and yet looking on them through their own guiltineſſe with a Servile feare, and finding as little comfort, or rather terror from them againe, they knew not how to hide their Slaviſh approach to *Gods* beheſts by them not underſtood, nor worthily receav'd, but by cloaking their Servile crouching to all *Religious* Preſentments, ſomtimes lawfull, ſometimes Idolatrous, under the name of *humility*, and terming the Py-bald frippery, and oſtentation of Ceremony's, decency.

Then was Baptiſme chang'd into a kind of exorciſme, and water Sanctifi'd by *Chriſts* inſtitute, thought little enough to waſh off the originall

Spot

Spot without the Scratch, or crosse impression of a Priests fore-finger: and that feast of free grace, and adoption to which *Christ* invited his Disciples to sit as Brethren, and coheires of the happy Covenant, which at that Table was to be Seal'd to them, even that Feast of love and heavenly-admitted fellowship, the Seale of filiall grace became the Subject of horror, and glouting adoration pageanted about, like a dreadfull Idol: which sometimes deceve's well meaning men, and beguiles them of their reward by their voluntary humility, which indeed is fleshly pride, preferring a fooliſh Sacrifice, and the rudiments of the world, as Saint *Paul* to the *Coloſſians* explaineth, before a savory obedience to *Christs* example. Such was *Peters* unseasonable Humilitie, as then his Knowledge was small, when *Christ* came to wash his feet; who at an impertinent time would needs straine courtesy with his Master, and falling troublesomly upon the lowly, alwise, and unexaminable intention of *Christ* in what he went with resolution to doe, so provok't by his interruption the meeke *Lord*, that he threat'nd to exclude him from his heavenly Portion, unlesse he could be content to be lesse arrogant, and stiff neckt in his humility.

But to dwell no longer in characterizing the *Depravities* of the *Church*, and how they sprung, and how they tooke increase; when I recall to mind at last, after so many darke Ages, wherein the huge overshadowing traine of *Error* had al-

most swept all the Starres out of the Firmament of the *Church*; how the bright and blissfull *Reformation* (by Divine Power) strook through the black and settled Night of *Ignorance* and *Antichristian Tyranny*, me thinks a soveraigne and reviving joy must needs rush into the bosome of him that reads or heares; and the sweet Odour of the returning *Gospell* imbath his Soule with the fragrancy of Heaven. Then was the Sacred BIBLE sought out of the dusty corners where prophane Falshood and Neglect had throwne it, the *Schooles* opened, *Divine* and *Humane Learning* rak't out of the *embers* of *forgotten Tongues*, the *Princes* and *Cities* trooping apace to the new erected Banner of *Salvation*; the *Martyrs*, with the unresistab'e *might* of *Weakenesse*, shaking the *Powers* of *Darkenesse*, and scorning the *fiery rage* of the old *red Dragon*.

The pleasing pursuit of these thoughts hath oft-times led mee into a serious question and debatement with my selfe, how it should come to passe that *England* (having had this *grace* and *honour* from GOD to be the first that should set up a Standard for the recovery of the *lost Truth*, and blow the first *Evangelick Trumpet* to the *Nations*, holding up, as from a Hill, the new Lampe of *saving light* to all Christendome should now be last, and most unsettl'd in the enjoyment of that *Peace*, whereof we taught the way to others; although indeed our *Wicklefs* preaching, at which all the succeding *Reformers* more effectually lighted

ted their *Tapers*, was to his Countrey-men but a short blaze soone dampt and stifi'd by the *Pope*, and *Prelates* for sixe or seven Kings Reignes; yet me thinkes the *Precedentie* which GOD gave this *Iland*, to be the first *Restorer* of *buried Truth*, should have beene followed with more happy successe, and sooner attain'd Perfection; in which, as yet we are amongst the last: for, albeit in *purity* of *Doctrine* we agree with our Brethren; yet in the *execution* and *applying* of *Doctrine* home, and laying the *salve* to the very *Orifice* of the *wound*; yea tenting and searching to the *Core*, without which *Pulpit Preaching* is but shooting at Rovers; in this we are no better then a *Schisme*, from all the *Reformation*, and a sore scandall to them; for while wee hold *Ordination* to belong onely to *Bishops*, as our *Prelates* doe, wee must of necessity hold also their *Ministers* to be no *Ministers*, and shortly after their *Church* to be no *Church*. Not to speake of those senceless *Ceremonies* which wee onely retaine, as a dangerous earnest of sliding back to *Rome*, and serving meerely, either as a mist to cover nakednesse where true *grace* is extinguisht; or as an Enterlude to set out the *pompe* of *Prelatisme*. Certainly it would be worth the while therefore and the paines, to enquire more particularly, what, and how many the cheife causes have been, that have still hindred our *Uniforme Consent* to the rest of the *Churches* abroad, (at this time especially) when the *Kingdome* is in a good *propensity* thereto; and all Men in Prayers,

ers, in Hopes, or in Disputes, either for or against it.

Yet will I not insist on that which may seeme to be the cause on GODS part; as his judgement on our sinnes, the tryall of his owne, the unmasking of Hypocrites; nor shall I stay to speake of the continuall eagernes and extreame diligence of the *Pope* and *Papists* to stop the furtherance of *Reformation*, which know they have no hold or hope of *England* their lost Darling, longer then the *goverment* of *Bishops* bolsters them out; and therefore plot all they can to uphold them, as may bee seene by the Booke of *Santa Clara* the Popish *Preist* in defence of *Bishops*, which came out piping hot much about the time that one of our own *Prelats* out of an ominous feare had writ on the same *Argnment*; as if they had joyn'd their forces like good Confederates to support one falling *Babel*.

But I shall cheifly indeavour to declare those Causes that hinder the forwarding of *true Discipline*, which are among our selves. Orderly proceeding will divide our inquirie into our *Fore-Fathers dayes*, and into *our Times*. HENRY the 8. was the first that rent this *Kingdome* from the *Popes* Subjection totally; but his Quarrell being more about *Supremacie*, then other faultinesse in *Religion* that he regarded, it is no marvell if hee stuck where he did. The next default was in the *Bishops*, who though they had renounc't the *Pope*, they still hugg'd the *Popedome*, and shar'd the Autho-

Authority among themselves, by their sixe bloody Articles persecuting the *Protestants* no slacker then the *Pope* would have done. And doutles, when ever the *Pope* shall fall, if his ruine bee not like the sudden down-come of a Towre, the *Bishops*, when they see him tottering, will leave him, and fall to scrambling, catch who may, hee a Patriarch dome, and another what comes next hand; as the French Cardinall of late, and the *See of Canterbury* hath plainly affected.

In *Edward* the 6. Dayes, why a compleate *Reform* was not effected, to any considerate man may appeare. First, he no sooner entred into his Kingdome, but into a Warre with *Scotland*, from whence the Protector returning with Victory had but newly put his hand to repeale the 6. *Articles*, and throw the Images out of *Churches*, but Rebellions on all sides stir'd up by obdurate Papists, and other Tumults with a plaine Warre in *Norfolke*, holding tack against two of the Kings *Generals*, made them of force content themselves with what they had already done. Hereupon follow'd ambitious Contentions among the *Peeres*, which ceas'd not but with the Protectors death, who was the most zealous in this point: and then *Northumberland* was hee that could doe most in *England*, who little minding *Religion*, (as his Apostacie well shew'd at his death,) bent all his wit how to bring the Right of the *Crowne* into his owne Line. And for the *Bishops*, they were so far from any such worthy Attempts, as that they

suffer'd themselves to be the common stales to countenance with their prostituted Gravities every Politick Fetch that was then on foot, as oft as the Potent *Statists* pleas'd to employ them. Never do we read that they made use of their Authority and high Place of accesse, to bring the jarring Nobility to *Christian* peace, or to withstand their disloyall Projects; but if a Toleration for *Masse* were to be beg'd of the King for his Sister MARY, left CHARLES the Fifth should be angry: Who but the grave Prelates *Cranmer* and *Ridley* must be sent to extort it from the young King? But out of the mouth of that godly and Royall *Childe*, Christ himselfe return'd such an awfull repulse to those haltring and time-serving *Prelates*, that after much bold importunity, they went their way not without shame and teares.

Nor was this the first time that they discover'd to bee followers of this World: for when the Protectors Brother, Lord *Sadley*, the Admirall through private malice and mal-engine was to lose his life, no man could bee found fitter then Bishop *Latimer* (like another Doctor *Shaw*) to divulge in his Sermon the forged Accusations laid to his charge, thereby to defame him with the People, who else was thought would take ill the innocent mans death, unlesse the Reverend *Bishop* could warrant them there was no foule play. What could be more impious then to debarre the Children of the King from their right to the Crowne? To comply with the ambitious Usur-

Usurpation of a Traytor; and to make void the last Will of HENRY 8. to which the Breakers had sworne observance? Yet Bishop *Cranmer*, one of the Executors, and the other *Bishops* none refusing, (lest they should resist the Duke of *Northumberland*) could finde in their Consciences to set their hands to the disinabling and defeating not onely of Princesse MARY the *Papist*, but of ELIZABETH the *Protestant*, and (by the *Bishops* judgement) the Lawfull issue of King HENRY.

Who then can thinke, (though these *Rebelles* had sought a further *Reformation*) that the least wry face of *Rebellion* would not have hush'd them. But it will be said, These men were *Martyrs*: What then? Though every true Christian will be a *Martyr* when he is called to it; not presently does it follow that every one suffering for Religion, is without exception. Saint *Paul* writes, that *A man may give his Body to be burnt*, (meaning for Religion) *and yet not have Charitie*: He is not therfore above all possibility of erring, because hee burnes for some Points of Truth.

Witnes the *Arians* and *Pelagians* which were slaine by the Heathen for *Christs* sake, yet we take both these for no true friends of *Christ*. If the *Martyrs* (saith *Cyprian* in his 30. Epistle) decree one thing, and the *Gospel* another, either the *Martyrs* must lose their Crowne by not observing the *Gospel* for which they are *Martyrs*; or the

Majestie of the *Gospel* must be broken and lie flat, if it can be overtopt by the *novelty* of any other *Decree*.

And herewithall I invoke the *Immortall* DEITIE *Reveler* and *Judge* of Secrets, That wherever I have in this BOOKE plainely and roundly (though worthily and truly) laid open the faults and blemishes of *Fathers*, *Martyrs*, or Christian *Emperors*, or have otherwise inveighed against Error and Superstition with vehement Expressions: I have done it, neither out of malice, nor list to speak evill, nor any vaine-glory; but of meere necessity, to vindicate the spotlesse *Truth* from an ignominious bondage, whose native worth is now become of such a low esteeme, that she is like to finde small credit with us for what she can say, unlesse shee can bring a Ticket from *Cranmer*, *Latimer*, and *Ridley*; or prove herselfe a retainer to *Constantine*, and weare his *badge*. More tolerable it were for the *Church* of GOD that all these Names were utterly abolisht, like the *Brazen Serpent*; then that mens fond opinion should thus idolize them, and the Heavenly *Truth* be thus captivated.

Now to proceed, whatsoever the *Bishops* were, it seemes they themselves were unsatisfi'd in matters of *Religion*, as they then stood, by that Commission granted to 8. *Bishops*, 8. other *Divines*, 8. *Civilians*, 8. *common Lawyers*, to frame *Ecclesiasticall Constitutions*; which no wonder if it came to nothing; for (as *Hayward* relates) both their

their Professions and their Ends were different. Lastly, we all know by Examples, that exact *Reformation* is not perfited at the first push, and those unweildy Times of *Edward 6.* may hold some Plea by this excuse: Now let any reasonable man judge whether that *Kings Reigne* be a fit time from whence to patterne out the Constitution of a *Church Discipline*, much lesse that it should yeeld occasion from whence to foster and establish the continuance of Imperfection with the commendatory subscriptions of *Confessors* and *Martyrs*, to intitle and ingage a glorious *Name* to a grosse *corruption*. It was not *Episcopacie* that wrought in them the Heavenly Fortitude of *Martyrdome*; as little is it that *Martyrdome* can make good *Episcopacie*: But it was *Episcopacie* that led the good and holy Men through the temptation of the *Enemie*, and the snare of this present world to many blame-worthy and opprobrious *Actions*. And it is still *Episcopacie* that before all our eyes worsens and sluggs the most learned, and seeming religious of our *Ministers*, who no sooner advance to it, but like a seething pot set to coole, sensibly exhale and reake out the greatest part of that zeale, and those Gifts which were formerly in them, settling in a skinny congealment of ease and sloth at the top: and if they keep their Learning by some potent sway of Nature, 'tis a rare chance; but their *devotion* most commonly comes to that queazy temper of luke-warmnesse, that gives a Vomit to GOD himselfe.

But what doe wee ſuffer miſ-ſhapen and enormous *Prelatiſme*, as we do, thus to blanch and varniſh her deformities with the faire colours, as before of *Martyrdome*, ſo now of *Epiſcopacie*? They are not *Biſhops*, GOD and all *good Men* know they are not, that have fill'd this Land with late confuſion and violence; but a Tyrannicall crew and Corporation of Impoſtors, that have blinded and abus'd the World ſo long under that Name. He that inabl'd with *gifts* from *God*, and the lawfull and Primitive choyce of the *Church* aſſembl'd in convenient number, faithfully from that time forward feeds his Parochiall *Flock*, ha's his coequall and compresbyteriall Power to ordaine *Miniſters* and *Deacons* by publique *Prayer*, and *Vote* of *Chriſts* Congregation in like ſort as he himſelfe was ordain'd, and is a true *Apoſtolick Biſhop*. But when hee ſteps up into the Chayre of *Pontificall* Pride, and changes a moderate and exemplary Houſe, for a miſ-govern'd and haughty *Palace*, *ſpirituall Dignity* for carnall *Precedence*, and *ſecular high Office* and *employment* for the *high Negotiations* of his Heavenly *Embaſſage*, Then he *degrades*, then hee *un-Biſhops* himſelfe; hee that makes him *Biſhop* makes him no *Biſhop*. No marvell therfore if S. *Martin* complain'd to *Sulpitius Severus* that ſince hee was *Biſhop* he felt inwardly a ſenſible decay of thoſe *vertues* and *graces* that *God* had given him in great meaſure before; Although the ſame *Sulpitius* write that he was nothing tainted, or alter'd in his *habit*, *dyet*, or perſonall

sonall *demeanour* from that simple plainnesse to which he first betook himselfe. It was not therfore that thing alone which *God* tooke displeasure at in the *Bishops* of those times, but rather an universall rottennes, and gangrene in the whole *Function*.

From hence then I passe to Qu. ELIZABETH, the next *Protestant* Prince, in whose Dayes why *Religion* attain'd not a perfect reducement in the beginning of her Reigne, I suppose the hindring Causes will be found to bee common with some formerly alledg'd for King EDWARD 6. the greennesse of the Times, the weake Estate which Qu. MARY left the Realme in, the great Places and Offices executed by *Papists*, the *Judges*, the *Lawyers*, the *Justices* of Peace for the most part *Popish*, the *Bishops* firme to *Rome*, from whence was to be expected the furious flashing of Excommunications, and absolving the *People* from their Obedience. Next, her private *Councellours*, whoever they were, perswaded her (as *Camden* writes) that the altering of *Ecclesiasticall Policie* would move sedition. Then was the *Liturgie* given to a number of moderate *Divines*, and Sir *Tho. Smith* a Statesman to bee purg'd, and Physick't: And surely they were moderate *Divines* indeed, neither hot nor cold; and *Grindall* the best of them, afterwards *Arch-Bishop* of *Canterbury* lost favour in the Court, and I think was discharg'd the goverment of his *See* for favouring the *Ministers*, though *Camden* seeme willing to finde another

Cause:

Cause: therefore about her second Yeare in a *Parliament* of Men and Minds some scarce well grounded, others belching the soure Crudities of yesterdayes *Popery*, those Constitutions of Edw. 6. which as you heard before, no way satisfi'd the men that made them, are now established for best, and not to be mended. From that time follow'd nothing but Imprisonments, troubles, disgraces on all those that found fault with the *Decrees* of the Convocation, and strait were they branded with the Name of *Puritans*: As for the Queene her selfe, shee was made beleeve that by putting downe *Bishops* her *Prerogative* would be infring'd, of which shall be spoken anon, as the course of Method brings it in. And why the *Prelats* labour'd should be so thought, ask not them, but ask their Bellies. They had found a good Tabernacle, they sate under a spreading Vine, their Lot was fallen in a faire Inheritance. And these perhaps were the cheife impeachments of a more sound rectifying the *Church* in the Queens Time.

From this Period I count to begin our Times, which, because they concerne us more nearely; and our owne eyes and eares can give us the ampler scope to judge, will require a more exact search; and to effect this the speedier, I shall distinguish such as I esteeme to be the hinderers of *Reformation* into 3. sorts, *Antiquitarians* (for so I had rather call them then *Antiquaries*, whose labours are usefull and laudable) 2. *Libertines*, 3. *Politicians*.

To

To the votaries of Antiquity I shall think to have fully answer'd, if I shall be able to prove out of Antiquity, First, that if they will conform our Bishops to the purer times, they must mew their feathers, and their pounces, and make but curtail'd Bishops of them; and we know they hate to be dockt and clipt, as much as to be put down outright. Secondly, that those purer times were corrupt, and their Books corrupted soon after. Thirdly, that the best of those that then wrote, disclaim that any man should repose on them, and send all to the Scriptures.

First therefore, if those that over-affect Antiquity, will follow the square thereof, their Bishops must be elected by the hands of the whole *Church*. The ancientest of the extant Fathers *Ignatius*, writing to the Philadelphians saith, *that it belongs to them as to the Church of God to choose a Bishop*. Let no man cavill, but take the Church of *God* as meaning the whole consistence of Orders and Members, as S. *Pauls* Epistles expresse, and this likewise being read over: Besides this, it is there to be mark'd, that those Philadelphians are exhorted to choose a Bishop of *Antioch*. Whence it seems by the way that there was not that wary limitation of Dioces in those times, which is confirm'd even by a fast friend of Episcopacie, *Camden*, who cannot but love Bishops, as well as old coins, and his much lamented Monasteries for antiquities sake. He writes in his description of *Scotland*, *that over all the world Bishops had no*

certaine Dioces, till Pope Dionysius *about the yeare* 268. *did cut them out*, and *that the Bishops of* Scotland *executed their function in what place soever they came indifferently, and without distinction till King* Malcolm *the third, about the yeare* 1070. whence may be gueſt what their function was: was it to goe about circl'd with a band of rooking Officials, with cloke bagges full of Citations, and Proceſſes to be ſerv'd by a corporalty of griffonlike Promooters, and Apparitors? Did he goe about to pitch down his Court, as an Empirick does his banck, to inveigle in all the mony of the Coũtrey? no certainly it would not have bin permitted him to exerciſe any ſuch function indifferently wherever he came. And verily ſome ſuch matter it was as want of a fat Dioces that kept our Britain Biſhops ſo poore in the Primitive times, that being call'd to the Councell of *Ariminum* in the yeare 359. they had not wherewithall to defray the charges of their journey, but were fed, and lodg'd upon the Emperors coſt, which muſt needs be no accidentall, but uſuall poverty in them, for the author *Sulp. Severus* in his 2 Booke of Church Hiſtory praiſes them, and avouches it praiſe-worthy in a Biſhop, to be ſo poore as to have nothing of his own. But to return to the ancient election of Biſhops that it could not lawfully be without the conſent of the people is ſo expreſſe in *Cyprian*, and ſo often to be met with, that to cite each place at large, were to tranſlate a good part of the volume, therfore touching the chief

chief passages, I referre the rest to whom so list peruse the Author himselfe: in the 24. *Epist. If a Bishop* saith he, *be once made and allow'd by the testimony and judgement of his collegues, and the people, no other can be made.* In the 55. *When a Bishop is made by the suffrage of all the people in peace.* In the 68. marke but what he saies, *The people chiefly hath power, either of choosing worthy ones, or refusing unworthy*: this he there proves by authorities out of the old and new Testament, and with solid reasons; these were his antiquities.

This voyce of the people to be had ever in Episcopal elections was so well known, before *Cyprians* time, even to those that were without the Church, that the Emperor *Alexander Severus* desir'd to have his governours of Provinces chosen in the same manner, as *Lampridius* can tell: So little thought it he offensive to Monarchy; and if single authorities perswade not, hearken what the whole generall Councel of *Nicæa* the first and famousest of all the rest determines, writing a Synodal *Epist.* to the African Churches, to warn them of Arrianisme, it exhorts them to choose orthodox Bishops in the place of the dead so they be worthy, and the people choose them, whereby they seem to make the peoples assent so necessary; that merit without their free choyce were not sufficient to make a Bishop. What would ye say now grave Fathers if you should wake and see unworthy Bishops, or rather no Bishops, but Egyptian task-masters of Ceremonies thrust pur-

posely upon the groaning Church to the affliction, and vexation of *Gods* people? It was not of old that a Conspiracie of Bishops could frustrate and fob off the right of the people, for we may read how S. *Martin* soon after *Constantine* was made Bishop of *Turon* in *France* by the peoples consent from all places thereabout, maugre all the opposition that the Bishops could make. Thus went matters of the Church almost 400. yeare after *Christ*, and very probably farre lower, for *Nicephorus Phocas* the Greek Emperour, whose reign fell neare the 1000. year of our Lord, having done many things tyrannically, is said by *Cedrenus* to have done nothing more grievous and displeasing to the people, then to have inacted that no Bishop should be chosen without his will; so long did this right remain to the people in the midst of other palpable corruptions: Now for Episcopall dignity, what it was, see out of *Ignatius*, who in his Epistle to those of *Trallis* confesseth *that the Presbyters, are his fellow Counsellers, and fellow benchers.* And *Cyprian* in many places, as in the 6. 41. 52. Epist. speaking of *Presbyters*, calls them his *Compresbyters*, as if he deem'd himselfe no other, whenas by the same place it appeares he was a Bishop, he calls them Brethren; but that will be thought his meeknesse: yea, but the *Presbyters* and Deacons writing to him think they doe him honour enough when they phrase him no higher then Brother *Cyprian*, and deare *Cyprian* in the 26. Epist. For their Authority 'tis evident

evident not to have bin single, but depending on the counsel of the *Presbyters*, as from *Ignatius* was erewhile alledg'd; and the same *Cyprian* acknowledges as much in the 6 Epist. and addes therto that he had determin'd from his entrance into the Office of Bishop to doe nothing without the consent of his people, and so in the 31. Epist, for it were tedious to course through all his writings which are so full of the like assertions, insomuch that ev'n in the womb and center of Apostacy *Rome* it selfe, there yet remains a glimps of this truth, for the Pope himselfe, as a learned English writer notes well, performeth all Ecclesiasticall jurisdiction as in Consistory amongst his Cardinals, which were originally but the Parish Priests of *Rome*. Thus then did the Spirit of unity and meeknesse inspire, and animate every joynt, and sinew of the mysticall body, but now the gravest, and worthiest Minister, a true Bishop of his fold shall be revil'd, and ruffl'd by an insulting, and only-Canon-wise Prelate, as if he were some slight paltry companion: and the people of *God* redeem'd, and wash'd with *Christs* blood, and dignify'd with so many glorious titles of Saints, and sons in the Gospel, are now no better reputed then impure ethnicks, and lay dogs; stones & Pillars, and Crucifixes have now the honour, and the almes due to *Christs* living members; the Table of Communion now become a Table of separation stands like an exalted platforme upon the brow of the quire, fortifi'd with bulwark, and barri-

barricado, to keep off the profane touch of the Laicks, whilſt the obſcene, and ſurfeted Prieſt ſcruples not to paw, and mammock the ſacramentall bread, as familiarly as his Tavern Biſket. And thus the people vilifi'd and rejected by them, give over the earneſt ſtudy of vertue, and godlineſſe as a thing of greater purity then they need, and the ſearch of divine knowledge as a myſtery too high for their capacity's, and only for Churchmen to meddle with, which is that the Prelates deſire, that when they have brought us back to Popiſh blindneſſe we might commit to their diſpoſe the whole managing of our ſalvation, for they think it was never faire world with them ſince that time: But he that will mould a modern Biſhop into a primitive, muſt yeeld him to be elected by the popular voyce, undioceſt, unrevenu'd, unlorded, and leave him nothing but brotherly equality, matchles temperance, frequent faſting, inceſſant prayer, and preaching, continual watchings, and labours in his Miniſtery, which what a rich bootie it would be, what a plump endowment to the many-benefice-gaping mouth of a Prelate, what a reliſh it would give to his canary-ſucking, and ſwan-eating palat, let old Biſhop *Mountain* judge for me.

How little therfore thoſe ancient times make for moderne Biſhops hath bin plainly diſcours'd, but let them make for them as much as they will, yet why we ought not ſtand to their arbitrement ſhall now appeare by a threefold corruption which

which will be found upon them. 1. The best times were spreadingly infected. 2. The best men of those times foully tainted. 3. The best writings of those men dangerously adulterated. These Positions are to be made good out of those times witnessing of themselves. First, *Ignatius* in his early dayes testifies to the Churches of *Asia*, that even then Heresies were sprung up, and rise every where, as *Eusebius* relates in his 3. Book, 35. chap. after the Greek number. And *Hegesippus* a grave Church writer of prime Antiquity affirms in the same Book of *Euseb.* c. 32. *that while the Apostles were on earth the depravers of doctrine did but lurk, but they once gon, with open forehead they durst preach down the truth with falsities*: yea those that are reckon'd for orthodox began to make sad, and shamefull rents in the Church about the trivial celebration of Feasts, not agreeing when to keep Easter day, which controversie grew so hot, that *Victor* the Bishop of *Rome* Excommunicated all the Churches of *Asia* for no other cause, and was worthily therof reprov'd by *Irenæus*. For can any sound Theologer think that these great Fathers understood what was Gospel, or what was Excommunication? doubtlesse that which led the good men into fraud and error was, that they attended more to the neer tradition of what they heard the Apostles somtimes did, then to what they had left written, not considering that many things which they did, were by the Apostles themselves profest to be done only

only for the preſent, and of meer indulgence to ſome ſcrupulous converts of the Circumciſion, but what they writ was of firm decree to all future ages. Look but a century lower in the 1. *cap.* of *Euſebius* 8. Book. What a univerſal fetter of impurity had invenom'd every part, order, and degree of the Church, to omit the lay herd which will be little regarded, *thoſe that ſeem'd to be our Paſtors*, ſaith he, *overturning the Law of Gods worſhip, burnt in contentions one towards another, and increſing in hatred and bitternes, outragiouſly ſought to upheld Lordſhip, and command as it were a tyranny.* Stay but a little, magnanimous Biſhops, ſuppreſſe your aſpiring thoughts, for there is nothing wanting but *Conſtantine* to reigne, and then Tyranny her ſelfe ſhall give up all her cittadels into your hands, and count ye thence forward her truſtieſt agents. Such were theſe that muſt be call'd the ancienteſt, and moſt virgin times between *Chriſt* and *Conſtantine*. Nor was this general contagion in their actions, and not in their writings: who is ignorant of the foul errors, the ridiculous wreſting of Scripture, the Hereſies, the vanities thick ſown through the volums of *Juſtin Martyr*, *Clemens*, *Origen*, *Tertullian* and others of eldeſt time? Who would think him fit to write an Apology for Chriſtian Faith to the Roman Senat, that would tell them how of the Angels, which he muſt needs mean thoſe in *Gen.* call'd the *Sons of God*, mixing with Women were begotten the Devills, as good *Juſtin Martyr*

tyr in his Apology told them. But more indignation would it move to any Christian that shall read *Tertullian* terming S. *Paul* a novice and raw in grace, for reproving S. *Peter* at *Antioch*, worthy to be blam'd if we beleeve the Epistle to the *Galatians*: perhaps from this hint the blasphemous Jesuits presum'd in *Italy* to give their judgement of S. *Paul*, as of a hot headed person, as *Sandys* in his Relations tells us.

Now besides all this, who knows not how many surreptitious works are ingraff'd into the legitimate writings of the Fathers, and of those Books that passe for authentick who knows what hath bin tamper'd withall, what hath bin raz'd out, what hath bin inserted, besides the late legerdemain of the Papists, that which *Sulpitius* writes concerning *Origens* Books gives us cause vehemently to suspect, there hath bin packing of old. In the third chap. of his 1. Dialogue, we may read what wrangling the Bishops and Monks had about the reading, or not reading of *Origen*, some objecting that he was corrupted by Hereticks, others answering that all such Books had bin so dealt with. How then shall I trust these times to lead me, that testifie so ill of leading themselvs, certainly of their defects their own witnesse may be best receiv'd, but of the rectitude, and sincerity of their life and doctrine to judge rightly, wee must judge by that which was to be their rule.

But it will be objected that this was an unsetl'd state of the Church wanting the temporall Ma-

giſtrate to ſuppreſſe the licence of falſe Brethren, and the extravagancy of ſtill-new opinions, a time not amicable for Church government, where the temporall and ſpirituall power did not cloſe in one beleife, as under *Conſtantine*. I am not of opinion to thinke the Church a *Vine* in this reſpect, becauſe, as they take it, ſhe cannot ſubſiſt without claſping about the Elme of worldly ſtrength and felicity, as if the heavenly City could not ſupport it ſelfe without the props and buttreſſes of ſecular Authoritie. They extoll *Conſtantine* becauſe he extol'd them; as our homebred Monks in their Hiſtories blanch the Kings their Benefactors, and brand thoſe that went about to be their Correctors. If he had curb'd the growing Pride, Avarice, and Luxury of the *Clergie*, then every Page of his Story ſhould have ſwel'd with his Faults; and that which *Zoſimus* the Heathen writes of him ſhould have come in to boot: wee ſhould have heard then in every Declamation how hee ſlew his Nephew *Commodus* a worthy man, his noble and eldeſt Son *Criſpus*, his Wife *Fauſta*, beſides numbers of his Friends; then his cruell exactions, his unſoundneſſe in Religion, favoring the *Arrians* that had been condemn'd in a Counſell, of which himſelfe ſate as it were Preſident, his hard meaſure and baniſhment of the faithfull and invincible *Athanaſius*, his living unbaptiz'd almoſt to his dying day; theſe blurs are too apparent in his Life. But ſince hee muſt needs bee the Load-ſtarre of *Reformation* as ſome men clatter,

ter, it will be good to see further his knowledge of *Religion* what it was, and by that we may likewise guesse at the sincerity of his Times in those that were not Heretically, it being likely that hee would converse with the famousest *Prelates* (for so he had made them) that were to be found for learning.

Of his *Arianisme* we heard, and for the rest, a pretty scantling of his Knowledge may be taken by his deferring to be baptiz'd so many yeares, a thing not usuall, and repugnant to the Tenor of *Scripture*, *Philip* knowing nothing that should hinder the *Eunuch* to be *baptiz'd* after *profession* of his *beleife*. Next, by the excessive devotion, that I may not say Superstition both of him and his Mother *Helena*, to find out the Crosse on which *Christ* suffer'd, that had long lien under the rubbish of old ruines, (a thing which the Disciples and Kindred of our Saviour might with more ease have done, if they had thought it a pious duty:) some of the nailes whereof hee put into his Helmet, to beare off blowes in battell, others he fasten'd among the studds of his bridle, to fulfill (as he thought, or his Court *Bishops* perswaded him) the Prophesie of *Zacharish*: *And it shall be that that which is in the bridles shall be holy to the Lord*. Part of the Crosse, in which he thought such Vertue to reside, as would prove a kind of *Palladium* to save the *Citie* where ever it remain'd, he caus'd to be laid up in a Pillar of Porphyrie by his Statue. How hee or his Teachers could erre that with halfe an eye open

upon Saint *Pauls* Principles, I know not how to imagine.

How should then the dim Taper of this Emperours age that had such need of snuffing, extend any beame to our Times wherewith wee might hope to be better lighted, then by those Luminaries that God hath set up to shine to us far neerer hand. And what *Reformation* he wrought for his owne time it will not be amisse to consider, hee appointed certaine times for Fasts, and Feasts, built stately Churches, gave large Immunities to the Clergie, great Riches and Promotions to *Bishops*, gave and minister'd occasion to bring in a Deluge of Ceremonies, thereby either to draw in the Heathen by a resemblance of their rites, or to set a glosse upon the simplicity, and plainnesse of Christianity which to the gorgeous solemnities of *Paganisme*, and the sense of the Worlds Children seem'd but a homely and Yeomanly *Religion*, for the beauty of inward Sanctity was not within their prospect.

So that in this manner the *Prelates* both then and ever since comming from a meane, and Plebeyan *Life* on a sudden to be Lords of stately Palaces, rich furniture, delicious fare, and *Princely* attendance, thought the plaine and homespun verity of *Christs* Gospell unfit any longer to hold their Lordships acquaintance, unlesse the poore thred-bare Matron were put into better clothes; her chast and modest vaile surrounded with celestiall beames they overlaid with wanton *tresses*,

and

and in a flaring tire bespeckl'd her with all the gaudy allurements of a Whore.

Thus flourish't the Church with *Constantines* wealth, and thereafter were the effects that follow'd; his Son *Constantius* prov'd a flat *Arian*, and his Nephew *Iulian* an Apostate, and there his Race ended; the Church that before by insensible degrees weak'ned and impair'd, now with large steps went downe hill decaying; at this time *Antichrist* began first to put forth his horne, and that saying was common that former times had woodden Chalices and golden *Preists*; but they golden Chalices and woodden *Preists*. Formerly (saith *Sulpitius*) *Martyrdome* by glorious death was sought more greedily, then now Bishopricks by vile Ambition are hunted after (speaking of these Times) and in another place; they gape after possessions, they tond Lands and Livings, they coure over their gold, they buy and sell: and if there be any that neither possesse nor traffique, that which is worse, they sit still, and expect guifts, and prostitute every inducement of grace, every holy thing to sale. And in the end of his History thus he concludes, all things went to wrack by the *faction*, *wilfulnesse*, and *avarice* of the *Bishops*, and by this means *Gods people*, & every *good man* was had in scorn and derision; which S. *Martin* found truly to be said by his friend *Sulpitius*; for being held in admiration of all men, he had onely the *Bishops* his enemies, found God lesse favorable to him after he was *Bishop* then before, &

for his last 16. yeares would come at no *Bishops* meeting. Thus you see Sir what *Constantines* doings in the Church brought forth, either in his own or in his Sons Reigne.

Now lest it should bee thought that somthing else might ayle this Author thus to hamper the Bishops of those dayes; I will bring you the opinion of three the famousest men for wit and learning, that *Italy* at this day glories of, whereby it may be concluded for a receiv'd opinion even among men professing the Romish Faith, that *Constantine* marr'd all in the Church. *Dante* in his 19. *Canto* of *Inferno* hath thus, as I will render it you in English blank Verse.

Ah Constantine, *of how much ill was cause*
Not thy Conversion, but those rich demaines
That the first wealthy Pope *receiv'd of thee.*

So in his 20. Canto of *Paradise* hee makes the like complaint, and *Petrarch* seconds him in the same mind in his 108. Sonnet which is wip't out by the Inquisitor in some Editions; speaking of the Roman *Antichrist* as meerely bred up by *Constantine.*

Founded in chast and humble Povertie,
'Gainst them that rais'd thee dost thou lift thy horn,
Impudent whoore, where hast thou plac'd thy hope?
In thy Adulterers, or thy ill got wealth?
Another Constantine *comes not in hast.*

Ario-

Ariosto of *Ferrara* after both these in time, but equall in fame, following the scope of his Poem in a difficult knot how to restore *Orlando* his chiefe Hero to his lost senses, brings *Astolfo* the English Knight up into the moone, where S. *John*, as he feignes, met him. *Cant.* 34.

And to be short, at last his guid him brings
Into a goodly valley, where he sees
A mighty masse of things strangely confus'd,
Things that on earth were lost, or were abus'd:

And amongst these so abused things listen what hee met withall, under the Conduct of the *Evangelist*.

Then past hee to a flowry Mountaine greene,
Which once smelt sweet, now stinks as odiously;
This was that gift (if you the truth will have)
That Constantine *to good* Sylvestro *gave.*

And this was a truth well knowne in *England* before this *Poet* was borne, as our *Chaucers* Plowman shall tell you by and by upon another occasion. By all these circumstances laid together, I do not see how it can be disputed what good this Emperour *Constantine* wrought to the Church, but rather whether ever any, though perhaps not wittingly, set open a dore to more mischiefe in Christendome. There is just cause therefore that when the *Prelates* cry out Let the Church be re-

form'd

form'd according to *Constantine*, it should sound to a judicious eare no otherwise, then if they should say Make us rich, make us lofty, make us lawlesse, for if any under him were not so, thanks to those ancient remains of integrity, which were not yet quite worne out, and not to his Government.

Thus finally it appears that those purer Times were no such as they are cry'd up, and not to be follow'd without suspicion, doubt and danger. The last point wherein the *Antiquary* is to bee dealt with at his owne weapon, is to make it manifest, that the ancientest, and best of the Fathers have disclaim'd all sufficiency in themselves that men should rely on, and sent all commers to the Scriptures, as all sufficient; that this is true, will not be unduly gather'd by shewing what esteeme they had of Antiquity themselves, and what validity they thought in it to prove Doctrine, or Discipline. I must of necessitie begin from the second ranke of Fathers, because till then Antiquitie could have no Plea. *Cyprian* in his 63. *Epistle*. If any, saith he, of our Auncestors either ignorantly or out of simplicity hath not observ'd that which the Lord taught us by his example (speaking of the Lords Supper) his simplicity *God* may pardon of his mercy, but wee cannot be excus'd for following him, being instructed by the Lord. And have not we the same instructions, and will not this holy man with all the whole Consistorie of Saints and Martyrs that liv'd of old

rise

rise up and stop our mouthes in judgement, when wee shall goe about to Father our Errors, and opinions upon their Authority: in the 73. *Epist.* hee adds, in vaine doe they oppose custome to us if they be overcome by reason; as if custome were greater then Truth, or that in spiritual things that were not to be follow'd, which is revel'd for the better by the holy Ghost. In the 74. neither ought Custome to hinder that Truth should not prevaile, for Custome without Truth is but agednesse of Error.

Next *Lactantius*, he that was prefer'd to have the bringing up of *Constantines* children in his second Booke of *Institutions*, Chap. 7. & 8. disputes against the vaine trust in Antiquity, as being the cheifest Argument of the Heathen against the Christians, they doe not consider, saith he, what Religion is, but they are confident it is true, because the Ancients deliver'd it, they count it a trespasse to examine it. And in the eighth, not because they went before us in time, therefore in wisedome, which being given alike to all Ages, cannot be prepossest by the Ancients, wherefore seeing that to seeke the Truth is inbred to all, they bereave themselves of wisedome the gift of God who without judgement follow the Ancients, and are led by others like bruit beasts. St. *Austin* writes to *Fortunatian* that he counts it lawfull in the bookes of whomsoever to reject that which hee finds otherwise then true, and so hee would have others deale by him. He neither ac-

counted, as it seems, those Fathers that went before, nor himselfe, nor others of his rank, for men of more then ordinary spirit, that might equally deceive, and be deceiv'd. and oftimes, setting our servile humors aside, yea *God* so ordering, we may find Truth with one man, as soon as in a Counsell, as *Cyprian* agrees 71. Epist. *Many things*, saith he, *are better reveal'd to single persons*. At *Nicea* in the first, and best reputed Counsell of all the world, there had gon out a Canon to divorce married Priests, had not one old man *Paphnutius* stood up, and reason'd against it.

Now remains it to shew clearly that the Fathers referre all decision of controversie to the Scriptures, as all-sufficient to direct, to resolve, and to determine. *Ignatius* taking his last leave of the Asian Churches, as he went to martyrdome exhorted them to adhere close to the written doctrine of the Apostles, necessarily written for posterity: so farre was he from unwritten traditions, as may be read in the 36. *c.* of *Eusebius* 3. *b.* In the 74. Epist. Of *Cyprian* against *Stefan* Bish. of *Rome* imposing upon him a tradition, *whence*, quoth he, *is this tradition? is it fetcht from the authority of Christ in the Gospel, or of the Apostles in their Epistles: for God testifies that those things are to be done which are written:* and then thus; *what obstinacie, what presumption is this to preferre humane Tradition before divine ordinance?* And in the same Epist. *If we shall return to the head, and beginning of divine tradition* (which we all know he means the Bible)

Bible) *humane error ceases, and the reason of heavenly misteries unfolded, whatsoever was obscure, becomes cleare.* And in the 14. Distinct. of the same Epist. directly against our modern fantasies of a still visible Church, he teaches, *that succession of truth may fail, to renew which we must have recourse to the fonntaines,* using this excellent similitude, *if a Channel, or Conduit pipe which brought in water plentifully before, suddenly fail, doe we not goe to the fountaine to know the cause, whether the Spring affords no more, or whether the vein be stopt, or turn'd aside in the midcourse: thus ought we to doe, keeping Gods precepts, that if in ought the truth shall be chang'd, we may repaire to the Gospel, and to the Apostles, that thence may arise the reason of our doings, from whence our order, and beginning arose.* In the 75. he inveighs bitterly against Pope *Stefanus*, for that he could boast his Succession from *Peter*, and yet foist in Traditions that were not Apostolicall. And in his Book of the unity of the Church he compares those that neglecting *Gods* Word, follow the doctrines of men, to *Coreh, Dathan*, and *Abiram*. The very first page of *Athanasius* against the Gentiles, averres the Scriptures to be sufficient of themselves for the declaration of Truth; and that if his friend *Macarius* read other Religious writers, it was but ἀποχάλως *come un virtuoso*, (as the Italians say,) as a lover of elegance: and in his 2d Tome the 39. pag, after he hath reckon'd up the Canonicall Books, *in these only*, saith he, *is the doctrine of godlinesse taught, let no man adde to these,*

or take from these; and in his *Synopsis*, having again set down all the Writers of the old & new Testament, *these*, saith he, *be the anchors, and props of our Faith*: besides these, millions of other Books have bin written by great and wise men according to rule, and agreement with these, of which I will not now speak, as being of infinite number, and meer dependance on the canonical Books. *Basil* in his 2d Tome writing of true Faith, tells his auditors he is bound to teach them that which he hath learn't out of the Bible: and in the same Treatise, he saith, *That seeing the Commandments of the Lord, are faithfull, and sure for ever; it is a plain falling from the Faith, and a high pride either to make void any thing therin, or to introduce any thing not there to be found*: and he gives the reason, *for Christ saith, My Sheep heare my voyce, they will not follow another, but fly from him, because they know not his voyce*. But not to be endlesse in quotations, it may chance to be objected, that there be many opinions in the Fathers which have no ground in Scripture; so much the lesse, may I say, should we follow them, for their own words shall condemn them, and acquit us, that lean not on them; otherwise these their words shall acquit them, and condemn us. But it will be reply'd, the Scriptures are difficult to be understood, and therfore require the explanation of the Fathers, 'tis true there be some Books, and especially some places in those Books that remain clouded; yet ever that which is most necessary to be known is most easie;

easie; and that which is most difficult, so farre expounds it selfe ever, as to tell us how little it imports our *saving knowledge*. Hence to inferre a generall obscurity over all the text, is a meer suggestion of the Devil to disswade men from reading it, and casts an aspersion of dishonour both upon the *mercy*, *truth*, and *wisdome* of *God*: We count it no gentleneſſe, or fair dealing in a man of Power amongst us, to require strict, and punctual obedience, and yet give out all his commands ambiguous and obscure, we should think he had a plot upon us, certainly such commands were no commands, but snares. The very essence of Truth is plainneſſe, and brightnes; the darknes and crookedneſſe is our own. The *wisdome* of *God* created *understanding*, fit and proportionable to Truth the object, and end of it, as the eye to the thing visible. If our *understanding* have a film of *ignorance* over it, or be blear with gazing on other false glisterings, what is that to Truth? If we will but purge with sovrain eyesalve that intellectual ray which *God* hath planted in us, then we would beleeve the Scriptures protesting their own plainnes, and perspicuity, calling to them to be instructed, not only the *wise*, and *learned*, but the *simple*, the *poor*, the *babes*, foretelling an extraordinary effusion of *Gods* Spirit upon every age, and sexe, attributing to all men, and requiring from them the ability of searching, trying, examining all things, and by the Spirit discerning that which is good; and as the Scriptures themselves

themselvs pronounce their own plainnes, so doe the Fathers testifie of them.

I will not run into a paroxysm of citations again in this point, only instance *Athanasius* in his fore-mention'd first page; *the knowledge of Truth*, saith he, *wants no humane lore, as being evident in it selfe, and by the preaching of Christ now opens brighter then the Sun.* If these Doctors who had scarse half the light that we enjoy, who all except 2 or 3 were ignorant of the Hebrew tongue, and many of the Greek, blundring upon the dangerous, and suspectfull translations of the Apostat *Aquila*, the Heretical Theodotion, the Judaiz'd *Symmachus*; the erroneous *Origen*; if these could yet find the Bible so easie, why should we doubt, that have all the helps of Learning, and faithfull industry that man in this life can look for, and the assistance of *God* as neer now to us as ever. But let the Scriptures be hard; are they more hard, more crabbed, more abstruse then the Fathers? He that cannot understand the sober, plain, and unaffected stile of the Scriptures, will be ten times more puzzl'd with the knotty Africanisms, the pamper'd metafors; the intricat, and involv'd sentences of the Fathers; besides the fantastick, and declamatory flashes; the crosse-jingling periods which cannot but disturb, and come thwart a setl'd devotion worse then the din of bells, and rattles.

Now Sir, for the love of holy *Reformation*, what can be said more against these importunat clients of Antiquity, then she her selfe their patroneſſe

troneſſe hath ſaid. Whether think ye would ſhe approve ſtill to dote upon immeaſurable, innumerable, and therfore unneceſſary, and unmercifull volumes, chooſing rather to erre with the ſpecious name of the Fathers, or to take a found Truth at the hand of a plain upright man that all his dayes hath bin diligently reading the holy Scriptures, and therto imploring *Gods* grace, while the admirers of Antiquity have bin beating their brains about their *Ambones*, their *Diptychs*, and *Meniaia's*? Now, he that cannot tell of Stations, and Indictions; nor has waſted his pretious howrs in the endles conferring of Councels and Conclaves that demoliſh one another, although I know many of thoſe that pretend to be great Rabbies in theſe ſtudies have ſcarce ſaluted them from the ſtrings, and the titlepage, or to give 'em more, have bin but the Ferrets and Mouſhunts of an Index: yet what Paſtor, or Miniſter how learned, religious, or diſcreet ſoever does not now bring both his cheeks full blown with Oecumenical, and Synodical, ſhall be counted a lank, ſhallow, unſufficient man, yea a dunce, and not worthy to ſpeak about *Reformation* of *Church Diſcipline*. But I truſt they for whom *God* hath reſerv'd the honour of Reforming this Church will eaſily perceive their adverſaries drift in thus calling for Antiquity, they feare the plain field of the Scriptures, the chaſe is too hot; they ſeek the dark, the buſhie, the tangled Forreſt, they would imbosk: they feel themſelvs ſtrook in the

tranſ-

transparent streams of divine Truth, they would plunge, and tumble, and thinke to ly hid in the foul weeds, and muddy waters, where no plummet can reach the bottome. But let them bear themselvs like Whales, and spend their oyl till they be dradg'd ashoar: though wherfore should the Ministers give them so much line for shifts, and delays? Wherfore should they not urge only the Gospel, and hold it ever in their faces like a mirror of Diamond, till it dazle, and pierce their misty ey balls? maintaining it the honour of its absolute sufficiency, and supremacy inviolable: For if the Scripture be for *Reformation*, and Antiquity to boot, 'tis but an advantage to the dozen, 'tis no winning cast: and though Antiquity be against it, while the Scriptures be for it, the Cause is as good as ought to be wisht, Antiquity it selfe sitting Judge.

But to draw to an end; the second sort of those that may be justly number'd among the hinderers of *Reformation*, are Libertines, these suggest that the Discipline sought would be intolerable: for one Bishop now in a Diocess we should then have a Pope in every Parish. It will not be requisit to Answer these men, but only to discover them, for reason they have none, but lust, and licentiousnes, and therfore answer can have none. It is not any Discipline that they could live under, it is the corruption, and remisnes of Discipline that they seek. Episcopacy duly executed, yea the Turkish, and Jewish rigor against whoring,

ing,

ing, and drinking; the dear, and tender Discipline of a Father, the friendly, and loving reproof of a Brother; the bosome admonition of a Friend is a *Purgatory*, and a Consistory to them. It is only the merry Frier in *Chaucer* can dispute them.

Full sweetly heard he confession
And pleasant was his absolution,
He was an easie man to give pennance.

And so I leave them: and referre the political discourse of Episcopacy to a Second Book.

OF

OF REFORMATION, &c.

The Second Book.

Sir,

IT is a work good, and prudent to be able to guide one man; of larger extended vertue to order wel one house; but to govern a Nation piously, and justly, which only is to say happily, is for a spirit of the greatest size, and divinest mettle. And certainly of no lesse a mind, nor of lesse excellence in another way, were they who by writing layd the solid, and true foundations of this Science, which being of greatest importance to the life of man, yet there is no art that hath bin more canker'd in her principles, more soyl'd, and slubber'd with aphorisming pedantry then the art of policie; and that most, where a man would thinke should least be, in Christian Common-wealths. They teach not that to govern well is to train up a Nation in true wisdom and vertue, and that which

which springs from thence magnanimity, (take heed of that,) and that which is our beginning, regeneration, and happiest end, likenes to *God*, which in one word we call *godlines*, & that this is the true florishing of a Land, other things follow as the shadow does the substance: to teach thus were meer pulpitry to them. This is the masterpiece of a modern politician, how to qualifie, and mould the sufferance and subjection of the people to the length of that foot that is to tread on their necks, how rapine may serve it selfe with the fair, and honourable pretences of publick good, how the puny Law may be brought under the wardship, and controul of lust, and will; in which attempt if they fall short, then must a superficial colour of reputation by all means direct or indirect be gotten to wash over the unsightly bruse of honour. To make men governable in this manner their precepts mainly tend to break a nationall spirit, and courage by countenancing open riot, luxury, and ignorance, till having thus disfigur'd and made men beneath men, as *Juno* in the Fable of *Io*, they deliver up the poor transformed heifer of the Commonwealth to be stung and vext with the breese, and goad of oppression under the custody of some *Argus* with a hundred eyes of jealousie. To be plainer Sir, how to foder, how to stop a leak, how to keep up the floting carcas of a crazie, and diseased Monarchy, or State betwixt wind, and water, swimming still upon her own dead lees, that now is

the deepe designe of a politician. Alas Sir! a Common-welth ought to be but as one huge Christian personage, one mighty growth, and stature of an honest man, as big, and compact in vertue as in body; for looke what the grounds, and causes are of single happines to one man, the same yee shall find them to a whole state, as *Aristotle* both in his ethicks, and politiks, from the principles of reason layes down, by consequence therfore, that which is good, and agreeable to monarchy, will appeare soonest to be so; by being good, and agreeable to the true wel-fare of every Christian, and that which can be justly prov'd hurtfull, and offensive to every true Christian, will be evinc'd to be alike hurtful to monarchy: for *God* forbid, that we should separate and distinguish the end, and good of a monarch, from the end and good of the monarchy, or of that, from Christianity. How then this third, and last sort that hinder reformation, will justify that it stands not with reason of state, I much muse? For certain I am, the *Bible* is shut against them, as certaine that neither *Plato*, nor *Aristotle* is for their turnes. What they can bring us now from the Schools of *Loyola* with his Jesuites, or their *Malvezzi* that can cut *Tacitus* into slivers and steaks, we shall presently hear. They alledge 1. That the Church government must be conformable to the civill politie, next, that no forme of Church government is agreeable to monarchy, but that of Bishops. Must Church gove rnment that is

appointed

appointed in the Gospel, and has chief respect to the soul, be conformable, and pliant to civil, that is arbitrary, and chiefly conversant about the visible and external part of man? this is the very maxim that moulded the Calvs of *Bethel* and of *Dan*; this was the quintessence of *Jeroboams* policy, he made Religion conform to his politick interests, & this was the sin that watcht over the Israelites till their final captivity. If this State principle come from the Prelates, as they affect to be counted statists, let them look back to *Ebethertius* Bishop of *Rome*, and see what he thought of the policy of *England*; being requir'd by *Lucius* the first Christian King of this Iland to give his counsel for the founding of Religious Laws, little thought he of this sage caution, but bids him betake himselfe to the old, and new Testament, and receive direction from them how to administer both Church, and Common-wealth, that he was *Gods* Vicar, and therfore to rule by *Gods* Laws, that the Edicts of *Cæsar* we may at all times disallow, but the Statutes of *God* for no reason we may reject. Now certaine if Church-government be taught in the Gospel, as the Bishops dare not deny, we may well conclude of what late standing this Position is, newly calculated for the altitude of Bishop elevation, and lettice for their lips. But by what example can they show that the form of Church Discipline must be minted, and modell'd out to secular pretences? The ancient Republick of the Jews is evident to

have

have run through all the changes of civil estate, if we survey the Story from the giving of the Law to the *Herods*, yet did one manner of Priestly government serve without inconvenience to all these temporal mutations: it served the mild Aristocracy of elective Dukes, and heads of Tribes joyn'd with them, the dictatorship of the Judges, the easie, or hard-handed Monarchy's, the domestick, or forrain tyrannies, Lastly the Roman Senat from without, the Jewish Senat at home with the Galilean Tetrarch; yet the Levites had some right to deal in civil affairs: but seeing the Euangelical precept forbids Churchmen to intermeddle with worldly imployments, what interweavings, or interworkings can knit the Minister, and the Magistrate in their several functions to the regard of any precise correspondency? Seeing that the Churchmans office is only to teach men the Christian Faith, to exhort all, to incourage the good, to admonish the bad, privately the lesse offender, publickly the scandalous and stubborn, to censure, and separate from the communion of *Christs* flock, the contagious, and incorrigible, to receive with joy, and fatherly compation the penitent, all this must be don, and more then this is beyond any Church authority. What is all this either here, or there to the temporal regiment of Wealpublick, whether it be Popular, Princely, or Monarchical? Where doth it intrench upon the temporal governor, where does it come in his walk? where does it

make

make inroad upon his iurisdiction. Indeed if the Ministers part be rightly discharg'd, it renders him the people more conscionable, quiet, and ease to be governed; if otherwise his life and doctrine will declare him. If therfore the Constitution of the Church be already set down by divine precept, as all sides confesse, then can she not be a handmaid to wait on civil commodities, and respects: and if the nature and limits of Church Discipline be such, as are either helpfull to all political estates indifferently, or have no particular relation to any, then is there no necessity, nor indeed possibility of linking the one with the other in a speciall conformation.

Now for their second conclusion, *That no form of Church government is agreeable to Monarchy, but that of Bishops*, although it fall to pieces of it selfe by that which hath bin layd: yet to give them play from, and teare, it shall be my task to prove that Episcopacy with that Authority which it challenges in *England* is not only not agreeable, but tending to the destruction of Monarchy. While the Primitive Pastors of the Church of *God* labour'd faithfully in their Ministery, tending only their Sheep, and not seeking, but avoiding all worldly matters as clogs, and indeed derogations, and debasements to their high calling, little needed the Princes, and potentates of the earth, which way soever the Gospel was spread, to study ways how to make a coherence between the Churches politie, and theirs: therfore when

Pilate

Pilate heard once our Saviour *Christ* professing that *his Kingdome was not of this world*, he thought the man could not stand much in *Cæsars* light, nor much indammage the Roman Empire: for if the life of *Christ* be hid to this world, much more is his Scepter unoperative, but in spirituall things. And thus liv'd, for 2 or 3 ages, the Successors of the Apostles. But when through *Constantines* lavish Superstition they forsook their *first love*, and set themselvs up two Gods instead, *Mammon* and their Belly, then taking advantage of the spiritual power which they had on mens consciences, they began to cast a longing eye to get the body also, and bodily things into their command, upon which their carnal desires, the Spirit dayly quenching and dying in them, they knew no way to keep themselves up from falling to nothing, but by bolstering, and supporting their inward rottenes by a carnal, and outward strength. For a while they rather privily sought opportunity, then hastily disclos'd their project, but when *Constantine* was dead, and 3 or 4 Emperors more, their drift became notorious, and offensive to the whole world: for while *Theodosius* the younger reign'd, thus writes *Socrates* the Historian in his 7*th* Book, 11. chap. now began an ill name to stick upon the Bishops of *Rome*, and *Alexandria*, who beyond their Priestly bounds now long agoe had stept into principality. and this was scarse 80. years since their raising from the meanest worldly condition. Of courtesie now let any man tell

me,

me, if they draw to themselves a *temporall strength* and *power* out of *Cæsars* Dominion, is not *Cæsars* Empire thereby diminisht? but this was a stolne bit, hitherto hee was but a Caterpiller secretly gnawing at *Monarchy*, the next time you shall see him a Woolfe, a Lyon, lifting his paw against his raiser, as *Petrarch* expresst it, and finally an open enemy, and subverter of the Greeke Empire. *Philippicus* and *Leo*, with divers other Emperours after them, not without the advice of their *Patriarchs*, and at length of a whole Easterne Counsell of 3. hundred thirty eight *Bishops*, threw the Images out of *Churches* as being decreed idolatrous.

Upon this goodly occasion the *Bishop* of *Rome* not only seizes the City, and all the Territory about into his owne hands, and makes himselfe Lord thereof, which till then was govern'd by a Greeke Magistrate, but absolves all *Italy* of their Tribute, and obedience due to the Emperour, because hee obey'd Gods Commandement in abolishing Idolatry.

Mark Sir here how the Pope came by S. *Peters* Patrymony, as he feigns it, not the donation of *Constantine*, but idolatry and rebellion got it him. Yee need but read *Sigonius* one of his owne Sect to know the Story at large. And now to shroud himselfe against a storme from the Greek Continent, and provide a Champion to beare him out in these practises, hee takes upon him by Papall sentence to unthrone *Childericus* the rightfull K. of *France*, and gives the Kingdome to *Pepin* for no

other cause but that hee seem'd to him the more active man. If he were a freind herein to *Monarchy* I know not, but to the *Monarch* I need not aske what he was.

Having thus made *Pepin* his fast freind, he cals him into *Italy* against *Aistulphus* the *Lombard*, that warr'd upon him for his late Usurpation of *Rome* as belonging to *Ravenna* which he had newly won. *Pepin*, not unobedient to the Popes call, passing into *Italy*, frees him out of danger, and wins for him the whole exarchat of *Ravenna*, which though it had beene almost immediately before, the hereditary possession of that *Monarchy* which was his cheife Patron, and Benefactor, yet he takes, and keepes it to himselfe as lawfull prize, and given to St. *Peter*. What a dangerous fallacie is this, when a spirituall man may snatch to himselfe any temporall Dignity, or Dominion under pretence of receiving it for the Churches use; thus he claimes *Naples*, *Sicily*, *England*, and what not? To bee short, under shew of his zeale against the errors of the Greeke Church, hee never ceast baiting, and goring the Successors of his best Lord *Constantine* what by his barking curses, and Excommunications, what by his hindering the Westerne Princes from ayding them against the Sarazens, and Turkes, unlesse when they humour'd him; so that it may be truly affirm'd, he was the subversion, and fall of that *Monarchy*, which was the hoisting of him; this, besides *Petrarch*, whom I have cited, our *Chaucer* also hath

observ'd

obſerv'd, and gives from hence a caution to *England* to beware of her *Biſhops* in time, for that their ends, and aymes are no more freindly to *Monarchy* then the Popes.

Thus hee brings in the Plow-man ſpeaking, 2. *Part. Stanz.* 28.

The Emperour Yafe the Pope ſometime
So high Lordſhip him abovt
That at laſt the ſilly Kime,
The proud Pope put him out,
So of this Realme is no doubt,
But Lords beware, and them defend,
For now theſe folks be wonders ſtout
The King and Lords now this amend

And in the next *Stanza* which begins the third part of the tale he argues that they ought not to bee Lords.

Moſes Law forbode it tho
That Preiſts ſhould no Lordſhips welde
Chriſts Goſpell biddeth alſo,
That they ſhould no Lordſhips held
Ne Chriſts Apoſtles were never ſo bold
No ſuch Lordſhips to hem embrace
But ſmeren her Sheep, and keep her Fold.

And ſo forward. Whether the Biſhops of *England* have deſerv'd thus to bee fear'd by men ſo wiſe as our *Chaucer* is eſteem'd, and how agree-

able to our *Monarchy*, and *Monarchs* their demeanour ha's been, he that is but meanly read in our *Chronicles* needs not be instructed. Have they not been as the *Canaanites*, and *Philistims* to this Kingdom? what Treasons, what revolts to the Pope, what Rebellions, and those the baseſt, and moſt pretenſeleſſe have they not been chiefe in? What could *Monarchy* think when *Becket* durſt *challenge* the custody of *Rotchester-Castle*, and the Tower of *London*, as appertaining to his Signory? To omit his other insolencies and affronts to Regall Majestie, till the Lashes inflicted on the anointed body of the King washt off the holy *Unction* with his *blood* drawn by the polluted hands of *Bishops*, *Abbots*, and *Monks*.

What good upholders of Royalty were the *Bishops*, when by their rebellious opposition against King *John*, *Normandy* was loſt, he himselfe depos'd, and this Kingdom made over to the *Pope*? When the *Bishop* of *Winchester* durſt tell the Nobles, the Pillars of the Realme, that there were no Peeres in *England*, as in *France*, but that the King might doe what hee pleas'd. What could Tyranny say more? it would bee petty now if I should inſiſt upon the rendring up of *Tournay* by *Woolseyes* Treason, the Excommunications, Cursings, and Interdicts upon the whole Land. For haply I shall be cut off short by a reply, that these were the faults of the men, and their Popish errors, not of *Episcopacie*, that hath now renounc't the Pope, and is a Protestant. Yes sure; as wise

and

and famous men have suspected, and fear'd the Protestant *Episcopacie* in *England*, as those that have fear'd the Papall.

You know Sir what was the judgement of *Padre Paolo* the great Venetian Antagonist of the *Pope*, for it is extant in the hands of many men, whereby he declares his feare, that when the Hierarchy of *England* shall light into the hands of busie and audacious men, or shall meet with Princes tractable to the Prelacy, then much mischiefe is like to ensue. And can it bee neerer hand, then when *Bishops* shall openly affirme that, No *Bishop*, no *King*? a trimme Paradox, and that yee may know where they have beene a begging for it, I will fetch you the Twin-brother to it out of the Jesuites Cell; they seeing the Axe of Gods reformation hewing at the old and hollow trunk of Papacie, and finding the Spaniard their surest friend, and safest refuge, to sooth him up in his dreame of a fift Monarchy, and withall to uphold the decrepit Papalty have invented this super-politick Aphorisme, as one termes it, One Pope, and one King.

Surely there is not any Prince in *Christendome*, who hearing this rare Sophistry can choose but smile, and if we be not blind at home we may as well perceive that this worthy Motto, No *Bishop*, no *King* is of the same batch, and infanted out of the same feares, a meere ague-cake coagulated of a certaine Fever they have, prefaging their time to be but short: and now like those that are sinking,

ing, they catch round at that which is likeliest to hold them up. And would perſwade Regall Power, that if they dive, he muſt after. But what greater debaſement can there be to Royall Dignity, whoſe towring, and ſtedfaſt heighth reſts upon the unmovable foundations of Juſtice, and Heroick vertue, then to chaine it in a dependance of ſubſiſting, or ruining to the painted Battlements, and gaudy rottenneſſe of Prelatrie, which want but one puffe of the Kings to blow them down like a paſt-bord Houſe built of *Court-Cards*. Sir the little adoe, which me thinks I find in untacking theſe pleaſant Sophiſmes, puts mee into the mood to tell you a tale ere I proceed further; and *Menenius Agrippa* ſpeed us.

A Tale. Upon a time the Body ſummon'd all the Members to meet in the Guild for the common good (as *Æſops* Chronicles averre many ſtranger Accidents) the head by right takes the firſt ſeat, and next to it a huge and monſtrous Wen little leſſe then the Head it ſelfe, growing to it by a narrower excreſcency. The members amaz'd began to aske one another what hee was that took place next their cheif; none could reſolve. Whereat the Wen, though unweildy, with much adoe gets up and beſpeaks the Aſſembly to this purpoſe. That as in place he was ſecond to the head, ſo by due of merit; that he was to it an ornament, and ſtrength, and of ſpeciall neere relation, and that if the head ſhould faile, none were fitter then himſelfe to ſtep into his place; therefore hee thought

thought it for the honour of the Body, that such dignities and rich indowments should be decreed him, as did adorne, and set out the noblest Members. To this was answer'd, that it should bee consulted. Then was a wise and learned Philosopher sent for, that knew all the Charters, Lawes, and Tenures of the Body. On him it is impos'd by all, as cheife Committee to examine, and discusse the claime and Petition of right put in by the Wen; who soone perceiving the matter, and wondring at the boldnesse of such a swolne Tumor, Wilt thou (quoth he) that art but a bottle of vitious and harden'd excrements, contend with the lawfull and free-borne members, whose certaine number is set by ancient, and unrepealable Statute? head thou art none, though thou receive this huge substance from it, what office bearst thou? What good canst thou shew by thee done to the Common-weale? the Wen not easily dash't replies, that his Office was his glory, for so oft as the soule would retire out of the head from over the steaming vapours of the lower parts to Divine Contemplation, with him shee found the purest, and quietest retreat, as being most remote from soile, and disturbance. Lourdan, quoth the Philosopher, thy folly is as great as thy filth; know that all the faculties of the Soule are confin'd of old to their severall vessels, and *ventricles*, from which they cannot part without dissolution of the whole Body; and that thou containst no good thing in thee, but a heape of

hard

hard, and loathsome uncleannes, and art to the head a foul disfigurment and burden, when I have cut thee off, and open'd thee, as by the help of these implements I will doe, all men shall see.

But to return, whence was digress't, seeing that the throne of a King, as the wise K. *Salomon* often remembers us, *is establisht in Justice*, which is the universall *Justice* that *Aristotle* so much praises, containing in it all other *vertues*, it may assure us that the fall of Prelacy, whose actions are so farre distant from *Justice*, cannot shake the least fringe that borders the royal canopy: but that their standing doth continually oppose, and lay battery to regal safety, shall by that which follows easily appear. Amongst many secondary, and accessory causes that support Monarchy, these are not of least reckning, though common to all other States: the love of the Subjects, the multitude, and valor of the people, and store of treasure. In all these things hath the Kingdome bin of late sore weak'nd, and chiefly by the Prelates. First let any man consider, that if any Prince shall suffer under him a commission of autority to be exerciz'd, till all the Land grone, and cry out, as against a whippe of Scorpions, whether this be not likely to lessen, and keel the affections of the Subject. Next what numbers of faithfull, and freeborn Englishmen, and good Christians have bin constrain'd to forsake their deareſt home, their friends, and kindred, whom nothing but the wide Ocean, and the savage deserts of *America*

rica could hide and shelter from the fury of the Bishops. O Sir, if we could but see the shape of our deare Mother *England*, as Poets are wont to give a personal form to what they please, how would she appeare, think ye, but in a mourning weed, with ashes upon her head, and teares abundantly flowing from her eyes, to behold so many of her children expos'd at once, and thrust from things of deerest necessity, because their conscience could not assent to things which the Bishops thought *indifferent*. What more binding then Conscience? what more free then *indifferency*? cruel then must that *indifferency* needs be, that shall violate the strict necessity of Conscience, merciles, and inhumane that free choyse, and liberty that shall break asunder the bonds of Religion. Let the Astrologer be dismay'd at the portentous blaze of comets, and impressions in the aire as foretelling troubles and changes to states: I shall beleeve there cannot be a more ill-boding signe to a Nation (*God* turne the Omen from us) then when the Inhabitants, to avoid insufferable grievances at home, are inforc'd by heaps to forsake their native Country. Now wheras the only remedy, and amends against the depopulation, and thinnesse of a Land within, is the borrow'd strength of firme alliance from without, these Priestly policies of theirs having thus exhausted our domestick forces, have gone the way also to leave us as naked of our firmest, & faithfullest neighbours abroad, by disparaging,

and alienating from us all Protestant Princes, and Common-wealths, who are not ignorant that our Prelats, and as many as they can infect, account them no better then a sort of sacrilegious, and puritanical Rebels, preferring the *Spaniard* our deadly enemy before them, and see all orthodox writers at nought in comparison of the Jesuites, who are indeed the onely corrupters of youth, and good learning; and I have heard many wise, and learned men in *Italy* say as much. It cannot be that the strongest knot of confederacy should not dayly slak'n, when Religion which is the chiefe ingagement of our league shall be turn'd to their reproach. Hence it is that the prosperous, and prudent states of the united Provinces, whom we ought to love, if not for themselves, yet for our own good work in them, they having bin in a manner planted, and erected by us, and having bin since to us the faithfull watchmen, and discoverers of many a Popish, and Austrian complotted Treason, and with us the partners of many a bloody, and victorious battell, whom the similitude of manners and language, the commodity of traffick, which founded the old Burgundian league betwixt us, but chiefly Religion should bind to us immortally, even such friends as these, out of some principles instill'd into us by the Prelates, have bin often dismist with distast full answers, and somtimes unfriendly actions: nor is it to be consider'd to the breach of confederate Nations whose mutual interest is

of

of such high consequence, though their Merchants bicker in the East Indies, neither is it safe, or warie, or indeed Christianly, that the *French* King, of a different Faith, should afford our neerest Allyes as good protection as we. Sir, I perswade my selfe, if our zeale to true Religion, and the brotherly usage of our truest friends were as notorious to the world, as our *Prelatical Schisme*, and captivity to *Ketchet Apothegmes*, we had ere this seene our old Conquerours, and afterward Liege-men the *Normans*, together with the *Britains* our proper Colony, and all the *Gascoins* that are the rightfull *Dowry* of our ancient Kings, come with cap, and knee, desiring the shadow of the *English* Scepter to defend them from the hot persecutions and taxes of the *French*. But when they come hither, and see a Tympany of *Spaniolized Bishops* swaggering in the fore-top of the State, and meddling to turne, and dandle the *Royall Ball* with unskilfull and *Pedantick* gambols, no marvell though they think it as unsafe to commit Religion, and liberty to their arbitrating as to a Synagogue of Iesuites.

But what doe I stand reckoning upon advantages, and gaines lost by the mis-rule, and turbulency of the *Prelats*, what doe I pick up so thriftily their scatterings and diminishings of the meaner Subject; whilst they by their seditious practises have indanger'd to loose the King one third of his main Stock; what have they not done to banish him from his owne Native Countrey? but to

speake of this as it ought would ask a Volume by it self.

Thus as they have unpeopl'd the Kingdome by expulsion of so many thousands, as they have endeavor'd to lay the skirts of it bare by disheartning and dishonouring our loyalleſt Confederates abroad, so have they hamstrung the valour of the Subject by seeking to effeminate us all at home. Well knows every wise Nation that their Liberty consists in manly and honest labours, in sobriety and rigorous honour to the Marriage Bed, which in both Sexes should be bred up from chast hopes to loyall Enjoyments; and when the people slacken, and fall to looseness, and riot, then doe they as much as if they laid downe their necks for some wily Tyrant to get up and ride. Thus learnt *Cyrus* to tame the *Lydians*, whom by Armes he could not, whilst they kept themselves from Luxury; with one easy Proclamation to set up *Stews*, dancing, feasting, & dicing he made them soone his slaves. I know not what drift the *Prelats* had, whose Brokers they were to prepare, and supple us either for a Forreigne Invasion or Domestick oppression; but this I am sure they took the ready way to despoile us both of *manhood* and *grace* at once, and that in the shamefulleſt and ungodlieſt manner upon that day which Gods Law, and even our own reason hath consecrated, that we might have one day at least of seven set apart wherein to examin and encrease our knowledge of God, to meditate, and commune of our

Faith,

Faith, our Hope, our eternall City in Heaven, and to quick'n, withall, the ſtudy, and exerciſe of Charity; at ſuch a time that men ſhould bee pluck't from their ſobereſt and ſaddeſt thoughts, and by *Biſhops* the pretended *Fathers of the Church* inſtigated by publique Edict, and with earneſt indeavour puſh't forward to gaming, jigging, waſſailing, and mixt dancing is a horror to think. Thus did the Reprobate hireling Preiſt *Balaam* ſeeke to ſubdue the Iſraelites to *Moab*, if not by force, then by this divelliſh *Pollicy*, to draw them from the Sanctuary of God to the luxurious, and ribald feaſts of *Baal-peor*. Thus have they treſpas't not onely againſt the *Monarchy* of *England*, but of Heaven alſo, as others, I doubt not, can proſecute againſt them.

I proceed within my own bounds to ſhew you next what good Agents they are about the Revennues and Riches of the Kingdome, which declares of what moment they are to *Monarchy*, or what availe. Two Leeches they have that ſtill ſuck, and ſuck the Kingdome, their Ceremonies, and their Courts. If any man will contend that Ceremonies bee lawfull under the Goſpell, hee may bee anſwer'd otherwhere. This doubtleſſe that they ought to bee many and over-coſtly, no true *Proteſtant* will affirme. Now I appeale to all wiſe men, what an exceſſive waſt of Treaſury hath beene within theſe few yeares in this Land not in the expedient, but in the Idolatrous erection of Temples beautified exquiſitely to out-vie

the Papists, the costly and deare-bought Scandals, and snares of Images, Pictures, rich Coaps, gorgeous Altar-clothes: and by the courses they tooke, and the opinions they held, it was not likely any stay would be, or any end of their madnes, where a pious pretext is so ready at hand to cover their insatiate desires. What can we suppose this will come to? What other materials then these have built up the *spirituall* BABEL to the heighth of her Abominations? Beleeve it Sir right truly it may be said, that *Antichrist* is *Mammons* Son. The soure levin of humane Traditions mixt in one putrifi'd Masse with the poisonous dregs of hypocrisie in the hearts of *Prelates* that lye basking in the Sunny warmth of Wealth, and Promotion, is the Serpents Egge that will hatch an *Antichrist* wheresoever, and ingender the same Monster as big, or little as the Lump is which breeds him. If the splendor of *Gold* and *Silver* begin to Lord it once againe in the Church of *England*, wee shall see *Antichrist* shortly wallow heere, though his cheife Kennell be at *Rome*. If they had one thought upon *Gods glory* and the advancement of Christian Faith, they would be a meanes that with these expences thus profusely throwne away in trash, rather *Churches* and *Schools* might be built, where they cry out for want, and more added where too few are; a moderate maintenance distributed to every painfull Minister, that now scarse sustaines his Family with Bread, while the *Prelats* revell like

Belshazzar

Belshazzar with their full carouses in *Gobleis*, and *vessels* of *gold* snatcht from *Gods Temple*. Which (I hope) the Worthy Men of our Land will consider. Now then for their COVRTS. What a Masse of Money is drawne from the Veines into the Ulcers of the Kingdome this way; their Extortions, their open Corruptions, the multitude of hungry and ravenous Harpies that swarme about their Offices declare sufficiently. And what though all this go not oversea? 'twere better it did: better a penurious Kingdom, then where excessive wealth flowes into the *gratelesse* and injurious hands of common sponges to the impoverishing of good and loyall men, and that by such execrable, such irreligious courses.

If the sacred and dreadfull works of holy *Discipline*, *Censure*, *Penunance*, *Excommunication*, and *Absolution*, where no prophane thing ought to have accesse, nothing to be assistant but sage and Christianly *Admonition*, brotherly *Love*, flaming *Charity*, and *Zeale*; and then according to the Effects, Paternall *Sorrow*, or Paternall *Joy*, milde *Severity*, melting *Compassion*, if such Divine *Ministeries* as these, wherin the Angel of the *Church* represents the Person of *Christ Jesus*, must lie prostitute to sordid Fees, and not passe to and fro betweene our Saviour that of free grace redeem'd us, and the submissive Penitent, without the truccage of perishing Coine, and the Butcherly execution of Tormentors, Rooks, and Rakeshames sold to lucre, then have the Babilonish

Mer-

Marchants of *Soules* juſt excuſe. Hitherto Sir you have heard how the *Prelates* have weaken'd and withdrawne the externall Accompliſhments of Kingly proſperity, the love of the People, their multitude, their valour, their wealth; mining, and ſapping the out-works, and redoubts of *Monarchy*; now heare how they ſtrike at the very heart, and virals.

We know that *Monarchy* is made up of two parts, the Liberty of the ſubject, and the ſupremacie of the King. I begin at the root. See what gentle, and benigne Fathers they have beene to our liberty. Their trade being, by the ſame Alchymy that the *Pope* uſes, to extract heaps of *gold*, and *ſilver* out of the droſſie *Bullion* of the Peoples ſinnes, and juſtly fearing that the quick-ſighted *Proteſtants* eye clear'd in great part from the miſt of Superſtition, may at one time or other looke with a good judgement into theſe their deceitfull Pedleries, to gaine as many aſſociats of guiltines as they can, and to infect the temporall Magiſtrate with the like lawleſſe though not ſacrilegious extortion, ſee a while what they doe; they ingage themſelves to preach, and perſwade an aſſertion for truth the moſt falſe, and to this *Monarchy* the moſt pernicious and deſtructive that could bee choſen. What more banefull to *Monarchy* then a Popular Commotion, for the diſſolution of *Monarchy* ſlides apteſt into a *Democracy*; and what ſtirs the Engliſhmen, as our wiſeſt writers have obſerv'd, ſooner to rebellion, then vio-

lent

lent, and heavy hands upon their goods and purses? Yet these devout *Prelates*, spight of our great Charter, and the soules of our Progenitors that wrested their liberties out of the *Norman* gripe with their dearest blood and highest prowesse, for these many years have not ceas't in their Pulpits wrinching and straining the *text*, to set at nought and trample under foot all the most sacred, and life blood Lawes, Statutes, and Acts of *Parliament* that are the holy Covenant of Union, and Marriage betweene the King and his Realme, by proscribing and confiscating from us all the right we have to our owne bodies, goods and liberties. What is this, but to blow a trumpet, and proclaime a fire-crosse to a hereditary, and perpetuall civill warre. Thus much against the Subjects Liberty hath been assaulted by them. Now how they have spar'd Supremacie, or likely are hereafter to submit to it, remaines lastly to bee consider'd.

The emulation that under the old Law was in the King toward the *Preist*, is now so come about in the Gospell, that all the danger is to be fear'd from the *Preist* to the *King*. Whilst the *Preists Office* in the Law was set out with an extetiour lustre of Pomp and glory, Kings were ambitious to be *Preists*; now *Priests* not perceiving the heavenly brightnesse, and inward splendor of their more glorious *Evangelick Ministery* with as great ambition affect to be Kings; as in all their courses is easie to be observ'd. Their eyes ever imminent

but

upon worldly matters, their desires ever thirsting after worldly employments, instead of diligent and fervent studie in the Bible; they covet to be expert in Canons, and Decretals, which may inable them to judge, and interpose in temporall Causes, however pretended *Ecclesiasticall*. Doe they not hord up *Pelfe*, seeke to bee potent in *secular Strength*, in *State Affaires*, in *Lands*, *Lordships*, and *Demeanes*, to *sway* and carry all before them in *high Courts*, and *Privie Counsels*, to bring in to their grasp, the *high*, and *principall Offices* of the Kingdom? have they not been bold of late to check the *Common Law*, to slight and brave the indiminishable Majestie of our highest Court the Law-giving and Sacred *Parliament*? Doe they not plainly labour to exempt *Churchmen* from the *Magistrate*? Yea, so presumptuously as to question, and menace *Officers* that represent the *King's Person* for using their Authority against drunken *Preists*? The cause of protecting *murderous Clergie-men* was the first heart-burning that swel'd up the audacious *Becket* to the pestilent, and odious vexation of *Henry* the second. Nay more, have not some of their devoted Scholiers begun, I need not say to nibble, but openly to argue against the Kings *Supremacie*? is not the Cheife of them accus'd out of his owne Booke, and his *late Canons* to affect a certaine unquestionable *Patriarchat*, independent and unsubordinate to the Crowne? From whence having first brought us to a servile *Estate* of *Religion*,

and

and *Manhood*, and having predispos'd his conditions with the *Pope*, that layes claime to this *Land*, or some *Pepin* of his owne creating, it were all as likely for him to aspire to the *Monarchy* among us, as that the *Pope* could finde meanes so on the sudden both to bereave the Emperour of the *Roman Territory* with the favour of *Italy*, and by an unexpected friend out of *France*, while he was in danger to lose his *new-got Purchase*, beyond hope to leap in to the faire *Exarchat* of *Ravenna*.

A good while the *Pope* sutt'ly acted the *Lamb*, writing to the Emperour, my Lord *Tiberius*, my Lord *Mauritius*, but no sooner did this his Lord pluck at the Images, and Idols, but hee threw off his Sheepes clothing, and started up a Wolfe, laying his pawes upon the Emperours right, as forfeited to *Peter*. Why may not wee as well, having been forewarn'd at home by our renowned *Chaucer*, and from abroad by the great and learned *Padre Paulo*, from the like beginnings, as we see they are, feare the like events? Certainly a wise, and provident King ought to suspect a *Hierarchy* in his Realme, being ever attended, as it is, with two such greedy Purveyers, Ambition and Usurpation. I say hee ought to suspect a *Hierarchy* to bee as dangerous and derogatory from his Crown as a *Tetrarchy* or a *Heptarchy*. Yet now that the *Popes* had almost attain'd to what their insolent, and unbridl'd minds had hurried them; to thrust the Nation under the despoticall rule of the *Monarch*, that they themselves might con-

fine the *Monarch* to a kind of Pupillage under their *Hierarchy*, observe but how their own *Principles* combat one another, and supplant each one his fellow.

Having fitted us only for peace, and that a servile peace, by lessening our numbers, dreining our estates, enfeebling our bodies, cowing our free spirits by those wayes as you have heard, their impotent actions cannot sustaine themselves the least moment, unlesse they rouze us up to a *Warre* fit for *Cain* to be the Leader of; an abhorred, a cursed, a Fraternall *Warre*. ENGLAND and SCOTLAND deareſt Brothers both in *Nature*, and in CHRIST must be set to wade in one anothers blood; and IRELAND our free Denizon upon the back of us both, as occasion should serve: a piece of Service that the *Pope* and all his Factors have beene compassing to doe ever since the *Reformation*.

But ever-blessed be he, and ever glorifi'd that from his high watch-Tower in the Heav'ns discerning the crooked wayes of perverse, and cruell men, hath hitherto maim'd, and infatuated all their damnable inventions, and deluded their great Wizzards with a delusion fit for fooles and children: had GOD beene so minded hee could have sent a Spirit of *Mutiny* amongst us, as hee did betweene *Abimilech* and the *Sechemites*, to have made our Funerals and slaine heaps more in number then the miserable surviving remnant, but he, when wee least deserv'd, sent out a gentle gale,

gale, and message of peace from the wings of those his Cherubins, that fanne his Mercy-seat. Nor shall the *wisdome*, the *moderation*, the *Christian Pietie*, the *Constancy* of our Nobility and Commons of *England* be ever forgotten, whose calme, and temperat connivence could sit still, and smile out the stormy bluster of men more audacious, and precipitant, then of solid and deep reach, till their own fury had run it selfe out of breath, assailing, by rash and heady *approches*, the impregnable situation of our Liberty and safety, that laught such weake enginry to scorne, such poore drifts to make a *Nationall Warre* of a *Surplice Brabble*, a *Tippet-scuffle*, and ingage the unattainted Honour of *English* Knighthood, to unfurle the streaming *Red Crosse*, or to reare the horrid *Standard* of those fatall guly Dragons for so unworthy a purpose, as to force upon their *Fellow-Subjects*, that which themselves are weary of, the *Skeleton* of a *Masse-Booke*. Nor must the *Patience*, the *Fortitude*, the *firme Obedience* of the Nobles and People of *Scotland* striving against manifold Provocations, nor must their sincere and moderate proceedings hitherto, be unremember'd, to the shamefull Conviction of all their Detractors.

Goe on both hand in hand O NATIONS never to be dis-united, be the *Praise* and the *Heroick Song* of all POSTERITY; merit this, but seeke onely *Vertue*, not to extend your Limits; for what needs? to win a fading triumphant *Lawrell* out of the *teares* of *wretched Men*, but to settle

the *pure worship* of *God* in his Church, and *justice* in the State. then shall the hardest difficulties smooth out themselves before ye; *envie* shall sink to hell, *craft* and *malice* be confounded, whether it be homebred mischeif, or outlandish cunning: yea all other Nations will then cover to serve ye, for Lordship and victory are but the pages of *justice* and *vertue*. Commit securely to true *wisdome* the vanquishing and uncasing of craft and suttletie, which are but her two runnagates: joyn your invincible might to doe worthy, and Godlike deeds, and then he that seeks to break your union, a cleaving curse be his inheritance to all generations.

Sir, you have now at length this question for the time, and as my memory would best serve me in such a copious, and vast theme, fully handl'd, and you your selfe may judge whether Prelacy be the only Church-goverment agreeable to MONARCHY. Seeing therfore the perillous, and confused estate into which we are faln, and that to the certain knowledge of all men through the irreligious pride and hatefull Tyranny of Prelats (as the innumerable, and grievous complaints of every shire cry out) if we will now resolve to settle affairs either according to pure Religion, or sound Policy, we must first of all begin roundly to cashier, and cut away from the publick body the noysom, and diseased tumor of Prelacie, and come from Schisme to *unity* with our neighbour Reformed sister Churches,

which

which with the blessing of *peace* and *pure doctrine* have now long time flourish'd, and doubtles with all hearty *joy*, and *gratulation*, will meet, and welcome our Christian *union* with them, as they have bin all this while griev'd at our strangenes and little better then separation from them. And for the Discipline propounded, seeing that it hath bin inevitably prov'd that the natural, and fundamental causes of political happines in all goverments are the same, and that this Church Discipline is taught in the Word of *God*, and, as we see, agrees according to wish with all such states as have receiv'd it, we may infallibly assure our selvs that it will as wel agree with Monarchy, though all the Tribe of *Aphorismers*, and *Politicasters* would perswade us there be secret, and misterious reasons against it. For upon the setling hereof mark what nourishing and cordial restorements to the State will follow, the Ministers of the Gospel attending only to the work of *salvation* every one within his limited charge, besides the diffusive blessings of *God* upon all our actions, the King shall sit without an old disturber, a dayly incroacher, and intruder; shall ridde his Kingdome of a strong sequester'd, and collateral power; a confronting miter, whose potent wealth, and wakefull ambition he had just cause to hold in jealousie: not to repeat the other present evills which only their removal will remove. And because things simply pure are inconsistent in the masse of nature, nor are the elements

or humors in Mans Body exactly *homogeneall*, and hence the best founded Common-wealths, and least barbarous have aym'd at a certaine mixture and temperament, partaking the severall vertues of each others State, that each part drawing to it selfe may keep up a steddy, and ev'n uprightnesse in common.

There is no Civill *Goverment* that hath beene known, no not the *Spartan*, not the *Roman*, though both for this respect so much prais'd by the wise *Polybius*, more divinely and harmoniously tun'd, more equally ballanc'd as it were by the hand and scale of Justice, then is the Common-wealth of *England*: where under a free, and untutor'd *Monarch*, the noblest, worthiest, and most prudent men, with full approbation, and suffrage of the People have in their power the supreame, and finall determination of highest Affaires. Now if Conformity of Church *Discipline* to the Civill be so desir'd, there can be nothing more parallel, more uniform, then when under the Soveraigne Prince *Christs* Vicegerent using the *Scepter* of *David*, according to *Gods Law*, the *godliest*, the *wisest*, the *learnedest* Ministers in their severall charges have the instructing and disciplining of *Gods people* by whose full and free Election they are consecrated to that holy and equall *Aristocracy*. And why should not the Piety, and Conscience of *Englishmen* as members of the Church be trusted in the Election of Pastors to Functions that nothing concerne a *Monarch*, as well as their worldly

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wiſedomes are priviledg'd as *members* of the *State* in ſuffraging their Knights, and Burgeſſes to matters that concern him neerely? And if in weighing theſe ſeverall Offices, their difference in time and qualitie be caſt in, I know they will not turn the beame of equall Judgement the moity of a ſcruple. Wee therfore having already a kind of Apoſtolicall, and ancient *Church* Election in our State, what a perverſneſſe would it be in us of all others to retain forcibly a kind of imperious, and ſtately Election in our *Church*? And what a blindneſſe to thinke that what is already Evangelicall as it were by a happy chance in our *Politie*, ſhould be repugnant to that which is the ſame by divine command in the Miniſtery? Thus then wee ſee that our Eccleſiall, and Politicall choyſes may conſent and ſort as well together without any ruptute in the STATE, as Chriſtians, and Freeholders. But as for honour, that ought indeed to be different, and diſtinct as either Office looks a ſeverall way; the Miniſter whoſe *Calling* and *end* is ſpirituall, ought to be honour'd as a Father and Phyſitian to the Soule (if he be found to be ſo) with a *Son*-like and *Diſciple*-like reverence, which is indeed the deareſt, and moſt affectionate *honour*, moſt to be deſir'd by a wiſe man, and ſuch as will eaſily command a free and plentifull proviſion of outward neceſſaries, without his furder care of this world.

The Magiſtrate whoſe Charge is to ſee to our Perſons, and Eſtates, is to bee honour'd with a

more elaborate and personall Courtship, with large Salaries and Stipends, that hee himselfe may abound in those things whereof his legall justice and watchfull care gives us the quiet enjoyment. And this distinction of Honour will bring forth a seemly and gracefull Uniformity over all the Kingdome.

Then shall the Nobles possesse all the Dignities and Offices of temporall honour to themselves, sole Lords without the improper mixture of Scholastick, and pusillanimous upstarts, the *Parliament* shall void her *Upper House* of the same annoyances, the Common, and Civill *Lawes* shall be both set free, the former from the controule, the other from the meere vassalage and *Copy hold* of the *Clergie*.

And whereas *temporall Lawes* rather punish men when they have transgrest, then form them to be such as should transgresse seldomest, *wee* may conceive great hopes through the showres of Divine Benediction, watering the unmolested and watchfull paines of the *Ministery*, that the whole Inheritance of God will grow up so straight and blamelesse, that the Civill Magistrate may with farre lesse toyle and difficulty, and far more ease and delight steare the tall and goodly *Vessell* of the Common-wealth through all the gusts and tides of the Worlds mutability.

Here I might have ended, but that some Objections, which I have heard commonly flying about, presse mee to the endevour of an answere.

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We must not run they say into sudden extreams. This is a fallacious Rule, unlesse understood only of the actions of Vertue about things indifferent, for if it be found that those two extreames be *Vice* and *Vertue*, *Falshood* and *Truth*, the greater extremity of *Vertue* and superlative *Truth* we run into, the more *vertuous*, and the more *wise* wee become; and hee that flying from degenerate and traditionall corruption, feares to shoot himselfe too far into the meeting imbraces of a Divinely-warranted *Reformation*, had better not have run at all. And for the suddennesse it cannot be fear'd. Who should oppose it? The *Papists*? They dare not. The *Protestants* otherwise affected. They were mad. There is nothing will be remoov'd but what to them is profess'dly indifferent. The long affection which the People have borne to it, what for it selfe, what for the odiousnes of *Prelates*, is evident: from the first yeare of Qu. *Elizabeth*, it hath still beene more and more propounded, desir'd, and beseech't, yea sometimes favourably forwarded by the *Parliaments* themselves. Yet if it were sudden & swift, provided still it be from worse to better, certainly wee ought to hie us from evill like a torrent, and rid our selves of corrupt Discipline, as wee would shake fire out of our bosomes.

Speedy and vehement were the *Reformations* of all the good Kings of *Juda*, though the people had beene nuzzl'd in Idolatry never so long before; they fear'd not the bug-bear danger, nor

ing they are Church-men, we may rather ſuſpect them for ſome *Prelatizing-ſpirits* that admire our *Biſhopricks*, not *Epiſcopacy*. The next objection vaniſhes of it ſelfe, propounding a doubt, whether a greater inconvenience would not grow from the corruption of any other diſcipline, then from that of *Epiſcopacy*. This ſeemes an unſeaſonable foreſight, and out of order to deferre, and put off the moſt needfull conſtitution of one right *diſcipline*, while we ſtand ballancing the diſcommodity's of two corrupt ones. Firſt conſtitute that which is right, and of it ſelfe it will diſcover, and rectify that which ſwerves, and eaſily remedy the pretended feare of having a *Pope* in every Pariſh, unleſſe we call the zealous, and meek cenſure of the *Church*, a *Popedom*, which who ſo does let him adviſe how he can reject the Paſtorly *Rod*, and Sheep-hooke of CHRIST, and thoſe cords of love, and not feare to fall under the iron *Scepter* of his anger that will daſh him to peeces like a Potſherd.

At another doubt of theirs I wonder; whether this diſcipline which we deſire, be ſuch as can be put in practiſe within this Kingdom, they ſay it cannot ſtand with the common Law, nor with the Kings ſafety; the government of Epiſcopacy, is now ſo weav'd into the common Law: In *Gods* name let it weave out againe; let not humain quillets keep back divine authority. 'Tis not the common Law, nor the civil, but pietty, and juſtice, that are our foundreſſes; they ſtoop

not

not, neither change colour for *Aristocracy*, *democracy*, or *Monarchy*, nor yet at all interrupt their just courses, but farre above the taking notice of these inferior niceties with perfect sympathy, where ever they meet, kisse each other. Lastly, they are fearfull that the discipline which will succeed cannot stand with the Ks. safety. Wherefore? it is but *Episcopacy* reduc't to what it should be, were it not that the Tyranny of *Prelates* under the name of *Bishops* hath made out eares tender, and startling, we might call every good Minister a *Bishop*, as every *Bishop*, yea the *Apostles* themselves are call'd Ministers, and the *Angels ministring Spirits*, and the *Ministers* againe *Angels*. But wherein is this propounded government so shrewd? Because the government of assemblies will succeed. Did not the *Apostles* govern the Church by assemblies, how should it else be Catholik, how should it have Communion? Wee count it Sacrilege to take from the rich *Prelates* their Lands, and revenu's which is Sacrilege in them to keep, using them as they doe, and can we think it safe to defraude the living Church of GOD of that right which GOD has given her in assemblies! O but the consequence: Assemblies draw to them the Supremacy of Ecclesiasticall jurisdiction. No surely, they draw no Supremacy, but that authority which CHRIST, and Saint *Paul* in his name conferrs upon them. The K. may still retain the same Supremacy in the Assemblies, as in the *Parliament*, here he can

and do

do nothing alone against the common Law, and there neither alone, nor with consent against the Scriptures. But is this all? No, this Ecclesiasticall Supremacy draws to it the power to excommunicate Kings; and then followes the worst that can be imagin'd. Doe they hope to avoyd this by keeping *Prelates* that have so often don it? Not to exemplifie the malapert insolence of our owne *Bishops* in this kind towards our Kings: I shall turn back to the *Primitive*, and pure times, which the objecters would have the rule of reformation to us.

Not an assembly, but one *Bishop* alone, Saint AMBROSE of *Millan*, held *Theodosius* the most Christian Emperor under excommunication above eight moneths together, drove him from the Church in the presence of his Nobles, which the good Emperor bore with heroick *humility*, and never ceas't by prayers, and teares, till he was absolv'd, for which coming to the Bishop with *Supplication* into the *Salutatory*, some out Porch of the Church, he was charg'd by him of tyrannicall madnes against GOD, for comming into holy ground. At last upon conditions absolv'd, and after great *humiliation* approaching to the Altar to offer (as those thrise pure times then thought meet) he had scarse with-drawne his hand, and stood awhile, when a bold Arch-deacon comes in the Bishops name, and chases him from within the railes telling him peremptorily that the place wherein he stood, was for none

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but the *Priests* to enter, or to touch: and this is another peece of pure *Primitive Divinity*. Thinke yee then our Bishops will forgoe the power of excommunication on whomsoever? No certainly, unlesse to compasse sinister ends, and then revoke when they see their time. And yet this most mild, though withall dredfull, and inviolable Prerogative of *Christs* diadem excommunication servs for nothing with them, but to prog, and pandar for fees, or to display their pride and sharpen their revenge, debarring men the protection of the Law, and I remember not whether in some cases it bereave not men all right to their worldly goods, and inheritances besides the denial of Christian burial. But in the Evangelical, and reformed use of this sacred censure, no such prostitution, no such *Ssatanical* drifts are to be doubted, as that *Spirituall* doom, and sentence, should invade worldly possession, which is the rightfull lot and portion, even of the wickedest men, as frankly bestow'd upon them by the all-dispensing bounty, as *rain*, and *Sun-shine*. No, no, it seekes not to bereave or destroy the body, it seekes to saue the Soule by humbling the body, not by Imprisonment, or pecuniary mulct, much lesse by stripes or bonds, or disinheritance, but by Fatherly admonishment, and Christian rebuke, to cast it into godly sorrow, whose end is joy, and ingenuous bashfulnesse to sin: if that can not be wrought, then as a tender Mother takes her Child and holds it over the pit with scarring

words, that it may learne to feare, where danger is, so doth excommunication as deerly, and as freely without money, use her wholsome and saving terrors, she is instant, she beseeches, by all the deere, and sweet promises of SALVATION she entices and woos, by all the threatnings, and thunders of the *Law*, and rejected *Gosspel* she charges, and adjures; this is all her Armory, her munition, her Artillery, then she awaites with long-sufferance, and yet ardent zeale. In briefe, there is no act in all the errand of *Gods Ministers* to man-kind, wherein passes more loverlike contestation betweene CHRIST and the Soule of a regenerate man lapsing, then before, and in, and after the sentence of Excommunication. As for the fogging proctorage of money, with such an eye as strooke *Gehezi* with Leprosy, and *Simon Magus* with a curse, so does she looke, and so threaten her firy whip against that banking den of theeves that dare thus baffle, and buy and sell the awfull, and majestick wrincles of her brow. He that is rightly and apostolically sped with her invisible arrow, if he cā be at peace in his Soule, and not smel within him the brimstone of Hell, may have faire leave to tell all his baggs over undiminish't of the least farding, may eat his dainties, drinke his wine, use his delights, enjoy his Lands, and liberties, not the least skin rais'd, not the least haire misplac't for all that excommunication has done: much more may a King injoy his rights, and Prerogatives undeflour'd

flowr'd, untouch'd, and be as absolute, and compleat a King, as all his royalties and revenu's can make him. And therefore little did *Theodosius* fear a plot upon his Empire when he stood excommunicat by Saint *Ambrose*, though it were done either with much hauty pride, or ignorant zeale. But let us rather look upon the reformed Churches beyond the seas, the *Grizons*, the *Suisses*, the *Hollanders*, the *French*, that have a Supremacy to live under as well as we, where do the Churches in all these places strive for Supremacy, where do they clash and justle Supremacies with the Civil *Magistrate*? In *France* a more severe Monarchy then ours, the *Protestants* under this Church goverment carry the name of the best Subjects the King has; and yet *Presbytery*, if it must be so call'd, does there all that it desires to doe: how easie were it, if there be such great suspicion, to give no more scope to it in *England*. But let us not for feare of a scar-crow, or else through hatred to be reform'd, stand hankering and politizing, when GOD with spread hands testifies to us, and points us out the way to our peace.

Let us not be so overcredulous, unlesse GOD hath blinded us, as to trust our deer Soules into the hands of men that beg so devoutly for the pride, and gluttony of their owne backs, and bellies, that sue and sollicite so eagerly, not for the saving of Soules, the consideration of which can have heer no place at all, but for their Bishop-

ricks, Deaneries, Prebends, and Chanonies; how can these men not be corrupt, whose very cause is the bribe of their own pleading; whose mouths cannot open without the strong breath, and loud stench of avarice, Simony, and Sacrilege, embezling the treasury of the Church on painted, and guilded walles of Temples wherein GOD hath testified to have no delight, warming their Palace Kitchins, and from thence their unctuous, and epicurean paunches, with the almes of the blind, the lame, the impotent, the aged, the orfan, the widow, for with these the treasury of CHRIST ought to be, here must be his jewels bestow'd, his rich Cabinet must be emptied heer, as the constant martyr Saint *Laurence* taught the *Roman Prætor*. Sir would you know what the remonstrance of these men would have, what their Petition imply's? They intreate us that we would not be weary of those insupportable grievances that our shoulders have hitherto crackt under, they beseech us that we would think 'em fit to be our Justices of peace, our Lords, our highest officers of State, though they come furnish't with no more experience then they learnt betweene the *Cook*, and the *manciple*, or more profoundly at the Colledge *audit*, or the *regent house*, or to come to their deepest insight, at their *Patrons Table*; they would request us to indure still the rustling of their Stiken Cassocks, and that we would burst our *midriffes* rather then laugh to see them under Sayt in all their Lawn, and Sarce-

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net, their shrouds, and tackle, with a *geometricall rhomboides* upon their heads: they would bear us in hand that we must of duty still appear before them once a year in *Jerusalem* like good circumcizd *males*, and *Females* to be taxt by the poul, to be sconst our head money, our suppences in their Chaunlerly Shop-book of *Easter*. They pray us that it would please us to let them still hale us, and worrey us with their band-dogs, and Pursivants; and that it would please the *Parliament* that they may yet have the whipping, fleecing, and fleaing of us in their diabolical Courts to tear the flesh from our bones, and into our wide wounds instead of balm, to power in the oil of Tartar, vitriol, and mercury; Surely a right reasonable, innocent, and soft-hearted Petition. O the relenting bowels of the Fathers. Can this bee granted them unlesse GOD have smitten us with frenzie from above, and with a dazling giddinesse at noon day? Should not those men rather be heard that come to plead against their owne preferments, their worldly advantages, their owne abundance; for honour, and obedience to *Gods word*, the conversion of Soules, the *Christian peace* of the Land, and *union* of the reformed *Catholick Church*, the *unappropriating*, and *unmonopolizing* the rewards of *learning* and *industry*, from the greasie clutch of ignorance, and high feeding. We have tri'd already, & miserably felt what *ambition worldly glory* & *immoderat wealth* can do, what the boistrous & contradictional hand of

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a temporall, earthly, and corporeall Spiritualty can availe to the edifying of Christs holy *Church*; were it such a desperate hazard to put to the venture the universall Votes of *Christs* Congregation, the fellowly and friendly yoke of a teaching and laborious Ministery, the Pastorlike and Apostolick imitation of meeke and unlordly Discipline, the gentle and benevolent mediocritie of Church-maintenance, without the ignoble Hucsterage of pidling *Tithes*? Were it such an incurable mischiefe to make a little triall, what all this would doe to the flourishing and growing up of *Christs* mysticall body? As rather to use every poore shift, and if that serve not, to threaten uproare and combustion, and shake the brand of Civill Discord?

O Sir, I doe now feele my selfe inwrapt on the sodaine into those mazes and *Labyrinths* of dreadfull and hideous thoughts, that which way to get out, or which way to end I know not, unlesse I turne mine eyes, and with your help lift up my hands to that Eternall and Propitious *Throne*, where nothing is readier then *grace* and *refuge* to the distresses of mortall Suppliants: and it were a shame to leave these serious thoughts lesse piously then the Heathen were wont to conclude their graver discourses.

Thou therefore that sits't in light & glory unapprochable, *Parent* of *Angels* and *Men!* next thee I implore Omnipotent King, Redeemer of that lost remnant whose nature thou didst assume, ineffa-

ineffable and everlasting *Love*! And thou the third subsistence of Divine Infinitude, *illumining Spirit*, the joy and solace of created *Things*! one *Tri-personall* GODHEAD! looke upon this thy poore and almost spent, and expiring *Church*, leave her not thus a prey to these importunate *Wolves*, that wait and thinke long till they devoure thy tender *Flock*, these wilde *Boares* that have broke into thy *Vineyard*, and left the print of thir polluting hoofs on the Soules of thy Servants. O let them not bring about their damned *designes* that stand now at the entrance of the bottomlesse pit expecting the Watch-word to open and let out those dreadfull *Locusts* and *Scorpions*, to *re-involve* us in that pitchy *Cloud* of infernall darknes, where we shall never more see the *Sunne* of thy *Truth* againe, never hope for the cheerfull dawne, never more heare the *Bird* of *Morning* sing. Be mov'd with pitty at the afflicted state of this our shaken *Monarchy*, that now lies labouring under her throwes, and struggling against the grudges of more dreaded Calamities.

O thou that after the impetuous rage of five bloody Inundations, and the succeeding Sword of intestine *Warre*, soaking the Land in her owne gore, didst pitty the sad and ceasles revolution of our swift and thick-comming sorrowes when wee were quite breathlesse, of thy *free grace* didst motion *Peace*, and termes of Cov'nant with us, & having first welnigh freed us from *Antichristian* thraldome, didst build up this *Britannick Empire*

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to a glorious and enviable heighth with all her Daughter Ilands about her, stay us in this felicitie, let not the obstinacy of our halfe Obedience and will-Worship bring forth that *Viper* of *Sedition*, that for these Foure-score Yeares hath been breeding to eat through the entrals of our *Peace*; but let her cast her Abortive Spawne without the danger of this travailling & throbbing *Kingdome*. That we may still remember in our *solemne Thanksgivings*, how for us the *Northren Ocean* even to the frozen *Thule* was scatter'd with the proud Ship-wracks of the *Spanish Armado*, and the very maw of Hell ransack't, and made to give up her conceal'd destruction, ere shee could vent it in that horrible and damned blast.

O how much more glorious will those former Deliverances appeare, when we shall know them not onely to have sav'd us from greatest miseries past, but to have reserv'd us for greatest happinesse to come. Hitherto thou hast but freed us, and that not fully, from the unjust and Tyrannous Claime of thy Foes, now unite us intirely, and appropriate us to thy selfe, tie us everlastingly in willing Homage to the *Prerogative* of thy eternall *Throne*.

And now wee knowe, O thou our most certain hope and defence, that thine enemies have been consulting all the Sorceries of the *great whore*, and have joyn'd their Plots with that sad Intelligencing Tyrant that mischieses the World with his Mines of *Ophir*, and lies thirsting to revenge

his Navall ruines that have larded our Seas; but let them all take Counsell together, and let it come to nought, let them Decree, and doe thou Cancell it, let them gather themselves, and bee scatter'd, let them embattell themselves and bee broken, let them imbattell, and be broken, for thou art with us.

Then amidst the *Hymns*, and *Halleluiahs* of *Saints* some one may perhaps bee heard offering at high *strains* in new and lofty *Measures* to sing and celebrate thy *divine Mercies*, and *marvelous Judgements* in this Land throughout all AGES; whereby this great and Warlike Nation instructed and inur'd to the fervent and continuall practice of *Truth* and *Righteousnesse*, and casting farre from her the rags of her old *vices* may presse on hard to that *high* and *happy* emulation to be found the *soberest*, *wisest*, and *most Christian People* at that day when thou the Eternall and shortly-expected King shalt open the Clouds to judge the severall Kingdomes of the World, and distributing *Nationall Honours* and *Rewards* to Religious and just *Common-wealths*, shalt put an end to all Earthly *Tyrannies*, proclaiming thy universal and milde *Monarchy* through Heaven and Earth. Where they undoubtedly that by their *Labours*, *Counsels*, and *Prayers* have been earnest for the *Common good* of *Religion* and their *Country*, shall receive, above the inferiour *Orders* of the *Blessed*, the *Regall* addition of *Principalities*, *Legions*, and *Thrones* into their glorious Titles, and in supereminence

of *beatifick Vision* progreſſing the *dateleſſe* and *irrevoluble* Circle of *Eternity* ſhall elaſp inſeparable Hands with *joy*, and *bliſſe* in over-meaſure for ever.

But they contrary that by the impairing and diminution of the true *Faith*, the diſtreſſes and ſervitude of their *Countrey* aſpire to high *Dignity*, *Rule* and *Promotion* here, after a ſhamefull end in this *Life* (which *God* grant them) ſhall be thrown downe eternally into the *darkeſt* and *deepeſt Gulfe* of HELL, where under the *deſpightfull controule*, the trample and ſpurne of all the other *Damned*, that in the anguiſh of their *Torture* ſhall have no other caſe then to exerciſe a *Raving* and *Beſtiall Tyranny* over them as their *Slaves* and *Negro's*, they ſhall remaine in that plight for ever, the *baſeſt*, the *lowermoſt*, the *moſt dejected*, moſt *underfoot* and *downe-trodden Vaſſals* of *Perdition*.

The End.

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